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A Qualitative Study Exploring the Perceptions of Superintendents Concerning the Impact of Tragedy and Disaster Upon the Role of Their School Organization

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF
SUPERINTENDENTS CONCERNING THE IMPACT OF TRAGEDY
AND DISASTER UPON THE ROLE OF THEIR SCHOOL
ORGANIZATION

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Mercedes, the creative force and love in my life who inspires me to be all that I can be.

To my three beautiful children, Laura, Anthony, and Stephanie, may you strive throughout your lives wherever it may lead to be all that you were meant to be.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within minutes of the worst terrorist attack in the history of the United States, the reverberations rippled through the nation's classrooms. School leaders agonized over whether to send students home to their families or to keep their buildings open—as one reassuring sign of stability in an unhinged world. Even outside the targeted cities, districts from Philadelphia to San Francisco suspended classes, postponed football games, and called off field trips, some out of concern for students' safety, others as a sign of respect for the victims. Parents raced to schools to hold their children close. Students and teachers made frantic calls to friends and relatives they feared were working in or near New York City's World Trade Center or the Pentagon, just outside Washington. Hijacked jetliners smashed into those two workplaces the morning of Sept. 11 2001, transforming them into scenes of devastation. In New York, Washington, and their suburbs, armies of counselors were mobilized for dispatch to schools as students returned to their classrooms (Gewertz, 2001).

Administrators closest to the attack sites took varying paths to ensure their students' security and sanity. But the assaults also put new demands for crisis management on other American school systems. Now, they were teaching urgent lessons about acts of terror and hatred. Educators also prepared for the possible aftermath for

students: from feelings of fear, grief, anger, and depression to bomb threats or retaliation against classmates (Gerwetz, 2001).

The world as we know it changed dramatically on September 11th, 2001. Since that crisp, clear day, when terrorists hijacked four commercial jetliners and killed thousands of innocent people, national and international politics have not been the same. Those dreadful events taught us about the cruelty of modern terrorism and forced us as educators to revise many of our assumptions about leadership, teaching, and global issues (Ravitch, 2002).

Given the horrific nature of the unprecedented attack on the World Trade Center and the trauma of this event upon the citizens of the United States, schools managed this crisis as best as they could. Some school districts were harder hit than others due to their location, but one thing is clear. Many children lost family members, friends, relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances. For those who did not suffer direct loss, they were more than likely exposed to hours of graphic violence through television news broadcast (Ravitch, 2002).

In the majority of school districts, the days following the September 11th attacks were marked by a strong resurgence of psychological support for children all across the country. School administrators, however, may have missed the mark in not addressing the long-term psychological damage this traumatic event would have upon their students and the concurrent impact on their academic achievement (Schlozman, 2001).

As now seems obvious, there was no playbook, no textbook on administration, and no school board policy, to turn to for guidance in dealing with such an unprecedented event as 9/11. The aftermath caused the best administrators to draw on the same

willingness to meet a challenge head-on that prompted many of them to become educational leaders in the first place. And as they did so, it became clear to many that the attacks and the war on terrorism launched in response had the potential to transform schools in as yet unknown ways, just as earlier wars had done. Over the next few months, administrators would have to learn to deal with an unprecedented range of issues—from emergency evacuation plans to the expansion of world religions into their curriculum (Colvin, 2002).

On March 21, 2003, President Bush issued his 48-hour ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq or face a U.S.-led military invasion. School administrators across the United States prepared for the worst—all while trying to have school days like any others.

They checked and double-checked disaster plans to make sure they were ready for chemical attacks by terrorists that might require them to lock down their schools. Some walked through evacuation drills to make sure students knew what to do in case of an assault. Principals also reviewed policies for teachers on how to talk with students about a war, and discussed whether to use television as a teaching device when the live coverage could turn bloody at a moment's notice. And they rallied their school counselors to ensure they were prepared to help students—and staff members—who might be struggling with emotional strains. Above all, though, school leaders worked to keep their campuses' running according to routine (Gewertz & Hoff, 2003).

Still, the memories of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, as well as the worries that the war could lead to new terrorist onslaughts

had school officials preparing seriously. Many schools spent weeks preparing for any traumatic repercussions from the war, which had been seen as a virtual certainty in the days before the first air strikes on Baghdad on March 19, 2003. Schools across the country reviewed their disaster plans and stockpiled water, food, and other supplies that might be needed in case of a chemical, biological, or other barrage (Gewertz & Hoff, 2003).

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., both adults and children struggled with the emotional impact of large-scale damage and losses of life. Other major acts of violence that have been felt across the country include the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. While these disasters have caught the nation's attention, they are only a fraction of the many tragic episodes that affect children's lives. Each year many children and adolescents sustain injuries from violence, lose friends or family members, or are adversely affected by witnessing a violent or catastrophic event. Each situation is unique, whether it centers upon a plane crash where many people are killed, automobile accidents involving friends or family members, or natural disasters such as the Northridge, California Earthquake (1994) or Hurricane Floyd (1999) where deaths occur and homes are lost—but these events have similarities as well, and cause similar reactions in children. Even in the course of everyday life, exposure to violence in the home or on the streets can lead to emotional harm (Gewertz & Hoff, 2003).

In this post 9/11 environment there are definite signs that schools must be on the anti-terrorism radar screen. In a recent report, four terrorists caught in Oregon said that

schools, churchs and synagogues were on their hit list. In getting to the heart of America, it appears that terrorists could be targeting schools. Yet most school principals know very little about who is coming into their building. While Columbine and similar tragedies have led many schools to draw up plans to handle shootings, terrorism is very different from a shooting (Lavarello, 2003).

Although the traumatic effects of September 11th will eventually subside, the educators' expanded role as crisis caregivers is unlikely to recede. Whether the crisis is a terrorist attack, school shooting, suicide, or natural disaster, schools will be expected to provide an effective response and appropriate caregiving services. The challenge for school districts is to increase their schools' ability to ensure the welfare of students and staff in times of crisis. Planning and training not only improve school safety, they can also help minimize anxiety and increase the resiliency of caregivers in the event of a crisis. Effective programs involve all school personnel, incorporate ongoing prevention and intervention strategies with critical response training, coordinate with community services, and provide post-event and caregiver support (Feinberg, 2002).

Prior to September 11th, the purpose of schooling, in the view of many educators, had been narrowed to train students in academic skills. The reputations of school districts rose or fell with their scores on state tests. The main thrust of the Bush administration's education reform that was then being developed was to make every school in America responsible for raising test performance for all students every year. School districts from Texas to California and Florida to New York reported they were focusing so much attention on raising test scores in math and reading that their teachers had little time for anything else (Colvin, 2002).

But that single-minded focus had to be re-examined as part of the aftermath of the attacks. While test scores and accountability are unlikely to disappear from the policy environment, schools and their leaders also are being asked to carry out a more complex agenda that serves broader civic goals and global issues. Now schools are explicitly being called on to teach an understanding of Islam, inculcate tolerance, foster a sense of community and instill patriotism—in addition to boosting test scores (Colvin, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Members of the school organization are called upon to take responsibility for dealing with multiple problems and issues each and every day, now they are faced with the overwhelming challenge of dealing with the ever present threat of terrorism, disaster, and the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy. The current literature review examined in this study suggests that the tragedy of September 11th has significantly impacted upon the school organization and its ability to provide for the needs of their students. School districts are now being called upon to seriously address their role in dealing with future disasters and the impact it may have upon their organization. In addition, they are now required to maintain updated emergency management plans, crisis intervention programs, and provide curriculum that encompasses the teaching of world religions and global concerns. The perceptions of superintendents regarding these issues will be investigated as well as the current research available on the impact of disaster and tragedy upon school communities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Superintendents concerning the impact of disaster and tragedy upon the role of their school organization.

Research Questions

1. To what extent has disaster and tragedy impacted upon the role of the school organization?
2. To what extent has the recent 9/11 tragedy impacted upon the members of the school community?
3. To what extent has the role of the school organization adapted to the increased threat of terrorism as well as the risk of disaster in order to meet the needs of the students within their school community?

Importance of Study

The importance of this study was to explore the perceptions of superintendents concerning the impact of disaster and tragedy upon the role of the school organization. It is intended that the analysis of their perceptions will further assist them in understanding the nature of the impact of disaster upon their school organization as well as guiding them toward a course of action. In addition, given the recent September 11th tragedy and the on-going threat of terrorism, the school organization must seriously re-evaluate their role and responsibility in dealing with the impact of future disasters, such as, the psychological impact upon students and staff and the need for psychological screening.

This study is also important in that the literature review suggests that there may be a significant portion of students and staff who are currently suffering from anxiety, depression, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and have not been identified or treated due to the lack of psychological screening by school districts after the 9/11 disaster. In addition, the literature suggests that this psychological stress may very well be adversely affecting academic achievement.

Superintendents will need to be informed and made aware that there are ongoing psychological issues with students and staff that may need to be addressed and that resources, time, and funding will need to be secured and allocated.

Rationale and Theoretical Framework

The terrorist attacks in New York City and at the Pentagon had an immediate impact on what teachers do in their classrooms—and the effects will likely be felt for years to come. Because of television, the Internet, handheld computer devices, and cell phones, teachers and students alike became witnesses to history. Textbooks, carefully planned activities, and even years of teaching experience seemed inadequate tools for dealing with events of such immediacy and magnitude (Hoff, 2001).

September 11th and the reactions from classrooms around the country, became a profound illustration of how teachers have in many ways become moderators rather than dispensers of knowledge in an age in which vast and instant access to information has put so much learning directly into the hands of students. Many teachers say the still-unfolding events have again made clear that the content of the curriculum and how it is taught cannot be stationary. At any moment, they say, they must be prepared to put aside their notes to take up more urgent matters (Hoff, 2001)

The events of September 11, 2001, are without precedent. The enormity of these terrorist attacks is disorienting and immensely anxiety provoking. These feelings are especially visceral for all of us who endeavor to aid children and adolescents in their understanding of these awful events. In fact, even those clinicians who specialize in the treatment of grief and trauma are feeling overwhelmed and clumsy. It is no wonder that

teachers and school administrators are struggling to discern the most helpful way to approach their students (Schlozman, 2001).

The differing responses and the ways students may mask them, most experts say, put teachers, principals, and school psychologists on the front lines to ensure that students are screened for psychological disorders, that they receive professional help if needed, and that they begin to heal from disastrous events that otherwise could leave lifelong scars (Hoff, 2001).

At the Pediatric Academic Societies conference in May 2002, researchers presented evidence of 9/11–related problems among children from Massachusetts and North Carolina. A published report from as far away as Italy documents the impact of 9/11 on subjective health status as measured by a survey using a standardized instrument. Children's reactions to traumatic stress are not well documented in the professional literature, and, before 9/11, information was not readily available to help parents understand their child's reactions or offer specific support. For this reason, The CHF Crisis Response Team, which provided ongoing counseling and support after 9/11, expected that parents would bring up more concerns about their child's reaction or ask about how to discuss the events with their children. It emerged that many parents did not readily recognize signs of emotional distress or relate them to the events of 9/11 (Redlener, 2002).

Although much attention has been paid—appropriately—to preparing for the potential threat of bioterrorism (availability of vaccines, pediatric hospital readiness protocols), it is also necessary to maintain readiness for the psychological impact of terrorism. Safeguarding children requires well-informed parents, school officials,

community leaders, and pediatricians and other primary care providers. They must be able to differentiate typical stress reactions from atypical responses that suggest a need for intervention. This in turn requires knowledge of typical and atypical developmental patterns (Redlener, 2002).

Events such as the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC, place everyone at risk for some degree of trauma reaction. It is normal and expected that most children will experience some symptoms of acute distress - shock, crying, anger, confusion, fear, sadness, grief and pessimism. Depending on circumstances, particularly the additional trauma of loss of family members, most children will experience a gradual lessening of these symptoms over the days and weeks following the event and will be able to resume normal routines and activities with little change in performance. However, due to the nature and scope of this event, a significant number of children are at risk for severe stress reactions. It is important to recognize that severe psychological distress is not simply a consequence of experiencing a threatening and/or frightening event; it is also a consequence of how a child experiences the event, coupled with his or her own unique vulnerabilities (Redlener, 2002). In addition, terrorist attacks in our country and threats or realities of war are frightening experiences for all Americans. Children may be especially fearful that threatened or actual military action overseas will result in more personal loss and violence here at home. Because repeated scenes of destruction of lives and property are featured in the news media, they understand that “enemies of the United States” can cause harm in this country (Waddell, 1998).

Given the traumatic nature of this event and the massive media coverage that was aired for such a prolonged period of time, students were exposed to graphic and

horrifying violence. As a result, current studies are producing evidence that many children and adults are still suffering psychological distress from the events of 9/11. Principals will need to provide their staff with additional training in order to identify depression and specific behaviors in their students that may suggest the need for intervention.

In addition, the role of the school organization in the aftermath of 9/11 will need to consider curricular and policy issues to include global perspectives, world religion, and the on-going threat of terrorism (Schlozman, 2001).

Definitions of Terms

Anxiety: Anxiety is a complex emotion, because it can be shown in cognitive, behavioral, and physiological ways, each of which may become the focus of intervention. It has been defined as apprehension, tension, or uneasiness related to the expectation of danger, whether internal or external. Anxiety may be focused on an object situation or activity that is avoided, as in phobia, or it may be unfocused. A variation of this definition has been proposed as apprehension, distress, or tension about real or anticipated internal or external threats that may be shown in cognitive, behavioral or physiological patterns. Of course, an event that is anxiety-producing for one person may not be for another person, or the level of anxiety may be different.

Depression: Depression is a *treatable* medical illness marked by changes in mood, thoughts, energy and behavior that affects more than 22 million adult Americans each year. It is the most common serious brain disease in the United States. Depression is more than the inevitable sadness or disappointment that accompanies life's ups and downs. It is a combination of five or more recognizable symptoms that are strikingly

distinct from a person's normal range of feelings and behavior. These depressive symptoms persist for more than two weeks and interfere with daily individual and family functioning. Depression involves the whole body but researchers have detected it in the brain through modern imaging techniques. People with depression have an imbalance of certain brain chemicals known as neurotransmitters. This imbalance produces serious and persistent *physical* symptoms such as changes in sleep, appetite and energy; *cognitive* losses such as slowed thinking and indecisiveness; and discernible *feelings* like irritability, hopelessness and guilt. Major depression is characterized by a single depressive episode that may recur during a person's lifetime. Although distressing life events can trigger a depression, not all stressful events lead to depression, nor are all depressive episodes preceded by a stressful event (Scholzman,2001)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: A diagnosis of PTSD means that an individual experienced an event that involved a threat to one's own or another's life or physical integrity and that this person responded with intense fear, helplessness, or horror. There are a number of traumatic events that have been shown to cause PTSD in children and adolescents. Children and adolescents may be diagnosed with PTSD if they have survived natural and man made disasters such as floods; violent crimes such as kidnapping, rape or murder of a parent, sniper fire, and school shootings; motor vehicle accidents such as automobile and plane crashes; severe burns; exposure to community violence; war; peer suicide; and sexual and physical abuse (Schlozman, 2001).

Self Esteem: There is general agreement that the term self-esteem includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements. It is cognitive as one consciously thinks about oneself as one considers the discrepancy between one's ideal self, the person one

wishes to be, and the perceived self or the realistic appraisal of how one sees oneself. The affective element refers to the feelings or emotions that one has when considering that discrepancy. The behavioral aspects of self-esteem are manifested in such behaviors as assertiveness, resilience, being decisive and respectful of others. Thus, self-esteem is difficult to define because of these multiple dimensions. In addition, although self-esteem is generally stable, it can fluctuate from time to time, a phenomenon which is referred to as global versus situational self-esteem, and which can make measuring or researching self-esteem very difficult.

Trauma: Trauma has both a medical and a psychiatric definition. Medically, "trauma" refers to a serious or critical bodily injury, wound, or shock. This definition is often associated with trauma medicine practiced in emergency rooms and represents a popular view of the term. Psychiatrically, "trauma" has assumed a different meaning and refers to an experience that is emotionally painful, distressful, or shocking, which often results in lasting mental and physical effects.

Terrorism: Terrorism is the process of inducing fear in the general population by means of acts that undercut an established sense of trust, stability and confidence in one's personal world. Unpredictable, dramatic acts of seemingly random violence are the terrorist's signature (Zimbardo, 2001).

Limitations of Study

Several limitations of this study are inherent and are acknowledged as follows:

1. This study is limited to the responses and perceptions of Superintendents within the school district of Hudson County in the State of New Jersey.

2. This study is limited to the possible personal and professional biases of respondents due to their own life experiences or educational training.
3. This study is limited as to the chosen forms of methodology, as the data chosen is that which is of interest to the researcher.
4. This study is limited as to the sample size of the interview group and the process of random solicitation/self selection.
5. This study is limited to the analysis of responses and perceptions of respondents by the researcher.
6. This study is limited to the particular question route designed by the researcher.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

It is difficult to comprehend the magnitude of the impact of the September 11th tragedy upon the students of this country. The following literature review suggests that the psychological impact was considerable and many students remain undetected with multiple psychological issues. In addition, the role of the school organization in dealing with the aftermath of 9/11 will be discussed as well as the current issues that they are now faced with in preparing for future tragedy and disasters.

The Impact of September 11th on the School Community

For the first time in U.S. history, American children and their families have been exposed—directly or via the media—to a horrific terrorist attack on multiple sites in our country. Unlike previous generations, the immediacy of this disaster is greatly increased by daily exposure to violence--both real and fictional. Real violence and tragedy is replayed on television almost as soon as it occurs. Sesame Street can be interrupted by a report of a sniper in an elementary school and news shows bring conflicts between other countries into American homes. Today's children also live in the world of Star Wars and Super Heroes. Luke Skywalker may be quickly relegated to the realm of fiction by adults, but for children this is not so easy. Youngsters have difficulty separating reality and

fantasy. Children who believe in Santa Claus can as easily believe in Darth Vader and Freddie Kruger (National Association of School Psychologists, 2001).

Efforts to understand the mental health effects of disasters in the U.S. have been hindered because large-scale events have thankfully been sparse. As the three-year anniversary of the terror attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon nears, the nation is still coming to terms with life in a changed world, but scientists are beginning to quantify the psychological damage caused by the effects of terrorism. According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, researchers found that the prevalence of probable PTSD was significantly associated with the number of hours of TV coverage of the attacks that participants reported watching and with the number of different kinds of potentially traumatic events they reported seeing (Schlenger, 2001).

These same children may have difficulty separating the realities of the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon from the fantasy of the media. Many American children are likely to have some personal connection to the victims of the September 11th disasters. If a family member is not involved, a friend or a classmate's family members may be victims in some way. The fact that these events were not limited to one site further increases the fear that such an event could occur close to home. All children need the support of caring adults to help them deal with this crisis (National Association of School Psychologists, 2001).

It has been well documented that children exposed to violence, life-threatening events or traumatic losses are at greater risk for depression, alcohol and substance abuse, and suicide. In the aftermath of tragedies such as the September 11 terrorist attacks, a

school shooting, natural disaster, or even a personal crisis, students may display warning signs of suicidal behavior. Parents and school personnel should be particularly observant of children and youth who may be more vulnerable because of individual circumstances. This includes youngsters who have experienced a personal loss, abuse, or previous traumatic event or who suffer from depression or other mental illness. Youngsters who have these risk factors *and* who have been directly impacted by or witnessed another crisis are most vulnerable (National Association of School Psychologists, 2001).

Terrorist attacks in our country and threats or realities of war are frightening experiences for all Americans. Children may be especially fearful that threatened or actual military action overseas will result in more personal loss and violence here at home. Because repeated scenes of destruction of lives and property are featured in the news media, they understand that “enemies of the United States” can cause harm in this country (National Association of School Psychologists, 2001).

In addition, terrorist attacks in our country and threats or realities of war are frightening experiences for all Americans. Children may be especially fearful that threatened or actual military action overseas will result in more personal loss and violence here at home. Because repeated scenes of destruction of lives and property are featured in the news media, they understand that “enemies of the United States” can cause harm in this country (Waddell, 1998).

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., both adults and children are struggling with the emotional impact of such large-scale damage and losses of life. Other major acts of violence that have been felt across the country include the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma

City and the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. While these disastrous events have caught the Nation's attention, they are only a fraction of the many tragic episodes that affect children's lives. Each year many children and adolescents sustain injuries from violence, lose friends or family members, or are adversely affected by witnessing a violent or catastrophic event. Each situation is unique, whether it centers upon a plane crash where many people are killed, automobile accidents involving friends or family members, or natural disasters such as the Northridge, California Earthquake (1994) or Hurricane Floyd (1999) where deaths occur and homes are lost—but these events have similarities as well, and cause similar reactions in children. Even in the course of everyday life, exposure to violence in the home or on the streets can lead to emotional harm (Lavarello, 2003).

In this post 9/11 environment there are definite signs that schools must be on the anti-terrorism radar screen. In a recent report, four terrorists caught in Oregon said that schools, church's and synagogues were on their hit list. In getting to the heart of America, it appears that terrorists could be targeting schools. Yet most school principals know very little about who is coming into their building as contractor or vendors. While Columbine and similar tragedies have led many schools to draw up plans to handle shootings, terrorism is very different from a shooting (Lavarello, 2003).

As the nation struggled to overcome a shared sense of horror and grief since that terrible day on September 11th, 2001, the initial emotional release of flag displays, candlelight vigils, and patriotic music has given way to the harder work of long-term recovery. Schools have played a pivotal role in this healing process as teachers, administrators, and other school personnel found themselves thrust into the role of crisis

caregivers. They had to ensure students' physical safety, allay their fears and sorrows, and comfort them (Feinberg, 2002).

It is difficult to assess the likelihood that our schools will become targets for terrorism. However, many security experts believe that schools are viable targets for terrorist activity. Understanding the terrorist's objective may explain why. Terrorists seek to provoke public fear and anxiety in order to influence government policy. Through the randomness and unpredictability of their acts, terrorists attempt to undermine confidence in the government's ability to protect the public. Terrorists hope the resulting insecurity fuels public demand for governmental concessions in order to curtail the terrorist acts (Dolphin, 2002).

Our children are America's most visible representation of innocence. Purely, from a terrorist's perspective, there would be no more effective way than to crush the heart of America, than to target our children at school, a place where they should feel the most safe (Dolphin, 2002).

Thomas Sobol, an education professor at Teachers College of Columbia University and a former superintendent in Scarsdale, N.Y., states that September 11th and its aftermath has not so much added new responsibilities as it has reinforced older parts of our mission that we have been neglecting." "We've not been looking at ... the deeper goals of education, preparing kids to live well in a democratic society, to understand their own culture and how it's viewed ... and to understand other cultures" (Colvin, 2002). Carl Cohn, the longtime superintendent of the Long Beach, Calif., Unified Schools, says he believed that Sept. 11 marked the end of an era of education reform that had begun 18 years earlier with the "Nation at Risk" report. Ever since, Cohn adds, education had been

at or near the top of Americans' concerns. But with the beginning of what may be a protracted war on terrorism, education is likely to fade in importance (Colvin, 2002). Whether the crisis is a terrorist attack, school shooting, suicide, or natural disaster, schools will be expected to provide an effective response and appropriate caregiving services. The challenge for administrators is to increase their schools' ability to ensure the welfare of students and staff in times of crisis. Planning and training not only improve school safety, they can also help minimize anxiety and increase the resiliency of caregivers in the event of a crisis. Effective programs involve all school personnel, incorporate ongoing prevention and intervention strategies with critical response training, coordinate with community services, and provide post-event and caregiver support (Feinberg, 2002).

Until a few months ago, the idea of schools as potential terrorist targets seemed too unlikely and too terrifying for principals to even discuss. However, with war in Iraq, and the U.S. on a heightened state of alert, security is on a lot of peoples' mind -- including educators. The federal government has warned that public places could be targets. And preparing a school building, staff members, and students for a potential attack -- something few principals have ever had to face -- is necessary at all schools, according to some school security consultants (Feinberg, 2002).

Schools were not initially included in the nation's homeland security plans, according to Trump. "The federal government has appropriately passed anti-terrorism and homeland security legislation to protect airlines, bridges, and other national critical infrastructure components, yet our K-12 schools were not included anywhere in those laws," Trump told Education World. "We have a federal education policy of No Child

Left Behind, but all schools have been left behind by Congress in terms of homeland security preparedness" (Feinberg, 2002).

The Response of the School Organization

The No Child Left Behind Act indicates schools need to develop crisis plans beyond what they traditionally have done and need to look at some of the new incidents that could take place. Schools have been told that if they don't have a crisis plan, they need to get one; if they have one, they need to update it. Many of these plans have not been reviewed since they were adopted, which was after some of the school shootings. Schools also need to review their plans with local emergency responders (Feinberg, 2002).

Concern that parents, students, and teachers would overreact to the topic of terrorism preparedness could be one reason for administrator's reluctance to address it.

However, fear is best managed through education, communication, and preparation. By not addressing these issues and operating with 'ostrich syndrome,' schools are actually creating more fear and panic among parents and school officials. The key rests in context, balance, and reasonable efforts. And of course, discussions with students must be age and developmentally appropriate (Feinberg, 2002).

Another reason is that some administrators may think that crisis plans adopted after school shootings several years ago are all they need. After those shooting incidents, many schools responded by creating general disaster kits that included maps, keys, student lists, flashlights, phone books, and duct tape, and establishing a simple evacuation plan or lockdown plan. But one crisis management plan does not fit all catastrophes, according to Lavarello. "Responding to a school crisis -- like a shooting or a fight -- is much different than responding to a terrorist attack" (Feinberg, 2002).

Feinberg (2002) states that he is concerned that some school districts will not take the mandate of crisis prevention seriously, as this will take a true commitment in terms of training, funding, time, incentives, resources and ongoing support. He goes on to list eight common problems he believes are currently holding administrators back from effectively implementing a crisis prevention plan within their school:

- a) *Lack of knowledge and skills* in developing crisis prevention and intervention programs. These skills were not taught in undergraduate programs in education.
- (b) *Lack of funding for training*. Professionals need to be trained in developing safe schools, crisis prevention and response.
- (c) *Lack of time*. Educators are hard pressed to fit the entire curriculum into their day. If crisis prevention and intervention activities are seen as an added burden as opposed to an opportunity, this will prevent their implementation.
- (d) *Lack of incentives*. Educators may need incentives to change their daily practice. It is usually easier to continue doing what you are doing than to change.
- (e) *Lack of resources and ongoing support*. In order to do these activities well, there is a need for added resources and ongoing support for all school personnel.
- (f) *Lack of emphasis on the emotional well being of students*. Schools spend a significant amount of time dealing with issues related to academic achievement and high stakes testing. However, not enough attention is placed on the development of emotional intelligence in our nation's children.
- (g) *Lack of reality*. Even in the aftermath of a multiple shooting that occurred in one particular school, the powers-to-be were reluctant to put into place a violence prevention program. Their point was that lightning does not strike twice in the same place.

(h) *A lack of preparedness* continues to be a common problem among today's school systems. Often, schools have only given lipservice to preparedness and often very well written crisis plans are left on the shelf collecting dust.

School resource officers also have expressed concern about the level of schools' preparedness. In a survey of 658 school police officers conducted in July 2002, 95 percent of respondents said their schools are vulnerable to terrorism; 79 percent said their schools are not prepared for an attack. One in three officers said they actually received *less* training in responding to terrorism since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

On March 21, 2003, President Bush issued his 48-hour ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to leave Iraq or face a U.S.-led military invasion. School administrators across the United States prepared for the worst—all while trying to have school days like any others.

They checked and double-checked disaster plans to make sure they were ready for chemical attacks by terrorists that might require them to lock down their schools. Some walked through evacuation drills to make sure students knew what to do in case of an assault. Principals also reviewed policies for teachers on how to talk with students about a war, and discussed whether to use television as a teaching device when the live coverage could turn bloody at a moment's notice. And they rallied their school counselors to ensure they were prepared to help students—and staff members—who might be struggling with emotional strains. Above all, though, school leaders worked to keep their campuses running according to routine (Gewertz & Hoff, 2003).

Still, the memories of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, as well as the worries that the war could lead to new terrorist onslaughts

had school officials preparing seriously. Many schools spent weeks preparing for any traumatic repercussions from the war, which had been seen as a virtual certainty in the days before the first air strikes on Baghdad on March 19, 2003. Schools across the country reviewed their disaster plans and stockpiled water, food, and other supplies that might be needed in case of a chemical, biological, or other barrage (Gewertz & Hoff, 2003).

In Philadelphia, schools prepared for a possible chemical attack by conducting occasional "shelter in place" drills, in which windows and doors are locked and sealed, and heat and ventilation systems shut down. All schools in the 200,000-student district now have shelter-in-place kits, which include student-enrollment lists, school floor plans, emergency phone numbers, duct tape and plastic for sealing windows, first-aid supplies, battery-powered radios, and walkie-talkies. They also keep a day's supply of food and water. Schools in the District of Columbia went one step further. Many of them practiced evacuation, much like a fire drill (Gewertz & Hoff, 2003).

At Rose L. Hardy Middle School in the Georgetown section of the nation's capital, solemn-faced teachers and students dutifully followed instructions during their practice drill the day after the bombing started in Baghdad. Individual students were given small tasks to complete—such as turning out the lights—and then all 420 students sat silently in the school's hallways for three minutes. In New York City, meanwhile, Deputy Schools Chancellor Anthony E. Shorris urged school leaders in a March 18 memo to review their safety plans and make sure all school personnel "are prepared to assume their roles" in case of emergency. Evacuation routes and locations should be known to all, the memo says, and administrators "must remain vigilant" in staying

informed of conditions around their schools, which serve a total of 1.1 million students (Gewertz & Hoff, 2003).

Some districts asked parents not to pick up children in the event of a chemical or biological attack. In a March 17, 2003 letter, Houston Superintendent Kaye Stripling assured parents that schools have safety plans in place, and urged them to "refrain" from coming to school to retrieve children until officials convey through the news media that it is safe to do so (Gewertz & Hoff, 2003).

The Fairfax County, Va., schools have a tiered readiness-and-response plan designed to correspond to each color of the national terrorist alerts, from the low-level green rising all the way up to red. The district has trained staff members in such areas as threat assessment, front-office security, and crisis communication. In the event of a code red, the 161,000-student district in the Washington suburbs is prepared to evacuate students or protect them in school buildings, depending on the threat; to increase building security; and to coordinate its crisis response with county agencies. But even with such a plan in place, the watchword in the district is flexibility (Gewertz & Hoff, 2003).

Principal Clementine Homesley was in a staff meeting with the special education team when "the school shook with a jolt." It was September 11th, 2001, the day terrorists crashed fuel-laden jetliners into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Arlington, Va. Homesley was at work just across the river from the Pentagon in M.V. Leckie Elementary School in Washington, D.C. "There was no preparation for this—war was going on outside the walls of the school," she says (Allen, 2001).

For Homesley and others, the tragedies had a personal impact: the attacks claimed the lives of Leckie student Curtis Brown, veteran teacher Hilda Taylor, and school parent

and Pentagon employee Marsha Ratchford. Brown and Taylor were passengers on one ill-fated jet with other local students and teachers bound for Los Angeles to take part in a geology field trip sponsored by the National Geographic Society. Weeks later, Homesley admitted the school is still grieving over losing members of its community to such inexplicable violence. Yet, she adds, "we will remain intact as working professionals devoted to the goals and tasks of education" to honor Taylor, Brown, and Ratchford. "When educators say 'children first,' Hilda was a pioneer," says Homesley (Allen, 2001). Leckie's students have looked to their principal and teachers to model "strength and composure." The school has also made use of grief counselors and taken time to talk and reflect "a lot," says Homesley. This is exactly what schools and families should be doing, say experts: Giving students a forum for expressing their emotions during such crises, whether they feel sadness, anger, or confusion, and allowing them to talk about what they have seen or heard in the news. But students also need calm adults giving reassurance of their own safety (Allen, 2001).

All schools were affected by the terrorist attacks, whether directly like Leckie Elementary School or indirectly through watching television images of the collapse of the World Trade Center towers and hearing of the tremendous loss of life. The effects of the surprise attacks still resonate throughout the United States, and a number of principals are urging teachers to draw some long-lasting lessons from the events of September 11 and afterwards (Allen, 2001).

The Impact of Terrorism on School Curriculum

Schools are the only place they learn to apply the understanding of the principles of the Constitution. If schools don't do this, our country won't be the envy of the world

for its open society. If people learn the value of their rights, they help sustain and expand them so society is more just and more free. There's still lots of injustice in the United States," says Charles Haynes, senior scholar at the First Amendment Center in Arlington, Va. In the wake of school violence, policies that restrict students more are understandable, but they don't work. Schools have moved to more of a prison model instead of a laboratory of freedom (Allen, 2001).

Haynes contrasts the responses of two California schools in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. One high school "bumbled around with a loudspeaker announcement and then teachers went on with their classes." Because of their own lack of knowledge, teachers couldn't answer students' questions about Islam, and the climate of "getting on with the work" didn't encourage dealing with students' emotions (Allen, 2001).

The other school was well prepared in teaching students about rights and responsibilities in civics courses, so it could help students deal with the event on a social and emotional level. The district superintendent had called all principals together the day after the attack and encouraged them to talk to students about tolerance and respect. Because world religions are taught as part of the geography curriculum, students already had an understanding of Islam as a religion that would not condone terrorist attacks (Allen, 2001).

A school promoting understanding of the First Amendment "takes religious liberty seriously and takes teaching about religion seriously. We have national guidelines that support doing it," says Haynes, referring to *Religious Expression in the Public Schools*, issued by the U.S. Department of Education (Allen, 2001).

Given that many young people are calling the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., the defining event of their generation, it should be no surprise that when Pope John Paul II met with the new U.S. ambassador to the Vatican on Sept. 13, two days after the attacks, he made an appeal to the youth of the country (Allen, 2001).

In a formal address, the pope told ambassador James Nicholson, "Young people are surely your nation's greatest treasure. That is why they urgently need an all-around education, which will enable them to reject cynicism and selfishness and to grow into their full stature as informed, wise, and morally responsible members of the community (Allen, 2001).

At the beginning of the new millennium, young people must be given every opportunity to take up their role as craftsmen of a new humanity, where brothers and sisters—members all of the same family—are able at last to live in peace." Part of that ability to build peace and understanding globally depends on what today's students learn in the classroom and what they do in society, because the rest of the world is watching. It's not just for our own sakes, but it's for the world family. We need to model that it is possible for a nation with extraordinary diversity to build a society that is free and just (Allen, 2001).

Last fall, the Bush administration launched a series of efforts aimed at involving schools in what might be called a homeland defense of American heritage and ideals. In conjunction with Veterans Day, the U.S. Department of Education asked schools to invite military veterans into classrooms to help students explore American history and values. The White House also posted on its Web site a "freedom timeline" that spotlighted uplifting episodes in American history, such as the liberation of slaves via the

Underground Railroad and the Berlin Airlift that brought humanitarian aid to trapped Germans at the end of World War II. The president also asked children to donate to a fund to benefit Afghan children and endorsed a project that connects American schools with counterparts in the Muslim world (Colvin, 2002).

Those efforts came on top of what already was a renewal of such outward signs of patriotic fervor as the Pledge to Allegiance and the revival of “God Bless America” as nation’s most widely sung hymn. “This has given a focus to discussions of what it means to be an American.” But that’s a discussion that’s fraught with the potential for conflict, especially in communities that are home to large numbers of immigrants. (Colvin, 2002)

One place educators have looked to for help in facilitating discussions is Educators for Social Responsibility, a group based in Cambridge, Mass. In the three months following the terrorist attacks, the group distributed more of its materials having to do with conflict resolution, how to deal with differences of opinion in classroom discussions and international security issues than in any similar period in its 20-year history. Larry Dieringer, the group’s executive director, says many teachers have strong feelings about the war and want to give their students opportunities to discuss it. But many also lack the skills needed to keep such discussions from spiraling out of control into adversarial shouting matches (Colvin, 2002).

Colvin (2002) states that for teachers it’s a real challenge to bring multiple perspectives into the classroom ... because there’s such strong support among people for the government’s actions and there’s a tight link between supporting the government and patriotism. Patriotism means believing in all of what a democracy stands for, including,

in times like this, making sure that everyone has a voice. But now many people believe that patriotism is following what our leaders say to do.

The potential for conflicts arising from displays of patriotism in the public schools played out in the liberal stronghold of Madison, Wis. Under a state law passed earlier in the year, students were supposed to begin saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag or sing the national anthem every school day morning before class beginning Oct. 1. But the district's school board was concerned that forcing students to participate would offend or alienate some students. So the board decided to simply play an instrumental recording of the anthem, unaccompanied by children's voices (Colvin, 2002).

Word of the policy sparked nationwide outrage. The school district had to assign five secretaries to answer phone calls from people complaining, often vociferously. "People really thought the district was being unpatriotic," Theoharis says. After a week, the board backed down and said schools could start the day with either the pledge or the anthem, and students were free to participate or not. The incident touched off political debate, marked by public commentaries from the right and the left. University of Michigan historian and education professor Jeffrey Mirel suggested public schools should balance those views by teaching explicit lessons about the superiority of democracy as a form of government—as long as they do so honestly and own up to the shortcomings of the United States while celebrating its triumphs (Colvin, 2002).

Another issue that's tested school administrators in recent months is how to handle what seems to be greater interest and support for expressions of spirituality on campus. On Sept. 11, the student body president at Sauk Prairie High School outside of

Madison, Wis., came to Principal Brian Salzer to ask permission to lead the 850-student school in prayer. As an alternative, Salzer suggested the student convene a prayer gathering for interested students in front of school the next morning (Colvin, 2002).

Terrence Deal, a professor of education at the University of Southern California and co-author of *Leading With Soul*, says the jolt of fear and horror dealt by the terrorists caused “people to focus on what really matters.” And test scores, he adds, are less important in the long run than are the relationships established between educators and their students (Colvin, 2002).

During World War II, school districts across America prepared adults to go into defense industries. They used war bonds in their math lessons and the map of war in their geography lessons. The schools, in myriad ways, became auxiliaries of the war effort. Cohn doesn’t expect that to happen again. Nor does he expect there to be a return of the draft. But he thinks there may well be some mandatory community service duty imposed on young people. Classrooms, meanwhile, will need to focus much more on the global economy and on the languages and geography of the Middle East and less on preparing students to head off to college. Leaders, he says, will “need to be able to peer around the corner ... and try to figure out what a cataclysmic event like this means” (Colvin, 2002).

Issues of right and wrong become magnified in times like these. You can be sure that 7-year olds and 17-year olds will be confused and conflicted by the events and implications of Sept. 11. As we have seen, some of these youngsters will be tormented by nightmares and many will stubbornly pose impossible questions. Their quest cannot be ignored. Avenues need to be created so students can ask why and consider complicated explanations. Some of our teaching, inevitably, must center on asking value-laden

questions. The ethical dilemmas that fictional characters face in literature, the complex decisions made by historic figures, the moral decisions that have confounded scientists—all of these need to be debriefed, dissected and discussed (Smith, 2002).

The Psychological Impact of Disaster and Tragedy

Research has shown that both adults and children who experience catastrophic events show a wide range of reactions. Some suffer only worries and bad memories that fade with emotional support and the passage of time. Others are more deeply affected and experience long-term problems. Research on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) shows that some soldiers, survivors of criminal victimization, torture and other violence, and survivors of natural and man-made catastrophes suffer long-term effects from their experiences. Children who have witnessed tragedy in their families, schools, or communities are also vulnerable to serious long-term problems. Their emotional reactions, including fear, depression, withdrawal or anger, can occur immediately or some time after the tragic event. Youngsters who have experienced a catastrophic event often need support from parents and teachers to avoid long-term emotional harm. Most will recover in a short time, but those who develop PTSD or other persistent problems need treatment (Smith, 2002).

Children's fears can have a self-preserving and motivational quality or have an inhibiting or debilitating effect. The numbers of untreated population often run as much as two times those of the treated population. In a recent survey of teachers in American international schools, the vast majority of teachers believed that children were adversely affected by fears and that as many as 50% were not functioning effectively at some time because of fear-related concerns. Children can be adversely affected by disasters and

terrors. A traumatic event in a child's life can lead to fear-related problems that interfere with the child's normal functioning. A child who otherwise is functioning on a high level with regard to the concepts of control, self-worth, and security may develop reactions to specific fear objects in this way (Smith, 2002).

Following a disaster, people may develop Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which is psychological damage that can result from experiencing, witnessing, or participating in an overwhelmingly traumatic (frightening) event. Children with this disorder have repeated episodes in which they re-experience the traumatic event. Children often relive the trauma through repetitive play. In young children, upsetting dreams of the traumatic event may change into nightmares of monsters, of rescuing others, or of threats to self or others. PTSD rarely appears during the trauma itself. Though its symptoms can occur soon after the event, the disorder often surfaces several months or even years later (Smith, 2002).

The events of September 11, 2001, are without precedent. The enormity of these terrorist attacks is disorienting and immensely anxiety-provoking. These feelings are especially visceral for all of us who endeavor to aid children and adolescents in their understanding of these awful events. In fact, even those clinicians who specialize in the treatment of grief and trauma are feeling overwhelmed and clumsy. It is no wonder that teachers and school administrators are struggling to discern the most helpful way to approach their students (Schlozman, 2002).

The differing responses and the ways students may mask them, most experts say, put teachers, principals, and school psychologists on the front lines to ensure that students are screened for psychological disorders, that they receive professional help if needed,

and that they begin to heal from events that otherwise could leave lifelong scars (Hoff, 2001).

In New York City, the Sept. 11 hijackers' prime target, schools received high marks for their initial response to the terrorism. But now, many parents, psychologists, and children's advocates are wondering whether the schools are prepared to deal with the emotional burden many students still carry (Hoff, 2002).

In a survey of more than 8,000 New York City children conducted last spring, about one in four reported symptoms related to the events of Sept. 11, and separate plane crash that occurred in the city soon thereafter, that suggested they would benefit from mental-health intervention. About 8 percent of the 4th through 12th graders surveyed were deemed to have suffered "major depression," 10 percent showed signs of "generalized anxiety," and 15 percent had agoraphobia—the fear of being in public places. More than 10 percent reported several symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder. The numbers were higher for youngsters who attended schools near the site of the World Trade Center. At least a third of the children with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder were not receiving mental-health services, according to the survey, which was conducted for the New York City board of education (Hoff, 2001).

Schools provided small-group settings in which students could talk about the terrorist assault; teachers referred students to school counselors; and administrators provided information on where they could seek professional help. Nonprofit organizations, along with the New York University Child Study Center and various hospitals, also sent counselors into schools. But the city schools did not provide one

service that psychologists generally believe all schools should supply in the aftermath of a traumatic event: basic psychological screening (Hoff, 2002).

Ms. Gurwitch counseled children affected by the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. There was, however, no universal psychological screening of children in Oklahoma City in the aftermath of that deadly event because of some school officials' fear of further traumatizing children. But Ms. Gurwitch argues that one of the lessons learned is that educators and parents need to be taught about the benefits and importance of such screening. And schools are the natural place to provide the service, psychologists say. Teachers and other school employees typically have established relationships with children, and the administration has an infrastructure to collect and analyze the results (Hoff, 2001).

Nevertheless, psychologists say, schools—with their access to students and the resources to provide such help—could make a significant difference for young people who still feel the emotional stress associated with Sept. 11. "We know that some percentage of children continue to have significant symptoms several years out [after a tragic event] unless you identify and treat them(Hoff, 2002).

Herman (1992) states that traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life" (1992, p. 33).¹ Traumatic events threaten one's sense of bodily or psychological integrity, thus potentially setting in motion the need to avoid particular settings or situations, to be vigilant for future attacks, and to continually re-experience the event as one attempts to organize and understand a morass of emotionally charged and seemingly senseless information (Schlozman, 2001).

Students at different ages experience severe trauma as a function of their developmental stage. For example, adolescents may re-experience traumatic events through intrusive memories and nightmares, whereas younger children might engage in repetitive imaginative play in which traumatic themes are prominent. Further, younger children may experience nightmares that are not immediately recognizable as related to a traumatic occurrence. Older children are much more likely to understand the content of their dreams and daydreams as stemming from post-traumatic symptoms. All age groups can experience such physical symptoms as stomach-aches and headaches in the wake of terrifying events. Young people experience these physical symptoms most often when they are exposed to cues that remind them of the trauma (Schlozman, 2001).

As with all psychosocial problems experienced by students, symptoms occur along a spectrum. Even students whose symptoms do not meet the full criteria for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Acute Stress Disorder may require attention. Severe states of hypervigilance, for example, can potentially affect a child's development, regardless of whether other symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder are present. The same can be said of severely avoidant or reexperiencing behavior. Although only a small percentage of students who are exposed to significant trauma develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, many traumatized students may experience a host of difficulties, including depression or social and academic problems. A traumatic event does not ensure that problems will develop, but the risk for problems increases among those students who are exposed to horrific occurrences (Schlozman, 2001).

Schlozman, (2001) reports that children and adolescents who cause trouble at home or at school may actually be depressed but not know it. Because the youngster may

not always seem sad, parents and teachers may not realize that troublesome behavior is a sign of depression. When asked directly, these children can sometimes state they are unhappy or sad.

The terrible events of September 11th have greater magnitude than previous traumatic events suffered and experienced by many people in the United States. Many clinicians and educators have expressed concern that their current level of expertise is not sufficient for present circumstances. The unfortunate reality, however, is that research on such tragic events as the Challenger explosion and the Oklahoma City bombing has taught us a great deal about the effects of trauma on large populations of children. In circumstances as disorienting as these, we need to extrapolate the ways in which our current knowledge can aid us with the present crisis. In fact, studies of other tragedies, including school shootings, massive earthquakes, hurricanes, and other acts of terrorism have demonstrated the effectiveness of quick interventions for those students who develop significant problems. By being vigilant and empathic, teachers can make an enormous contribution to the well-being of students during these difficult times. At a time when a sense of community is essential, the classroom can become a potent force for healing (Schlozman, 2001).

Teachers and administrators are increasingly asked to vigilantly watch for signs of depressed mood and sadness in their students. Children and adolescents who suffer from depression encounter more academic and social problems than their peers, often fail to progress and mature developmentally, and may experience a multitude of coexisting psychological problems, such as substance abuse and violent behavior. Indeed, the stakes are high when we fail to notice depression, and often the first signs of mental health

difficulties occur in the classroom. Teachers often feel unsure and bewildered as they try to understand how best to recognize and reach the depressed student. Depressed children and adolescents may be disruptive or withdrawn, and they may leave their teachers and peers with a profound sense of hopelessness. Identifying and taking action to help a potentially depressed student is essential for meeting the academic and social needs of the student and for maintaining the overall learning environment (Schlozman, 2001)

Depression is a psychiatric disorder characterized by a persistently sad or sometimes irritable mood. Formal criteria for the disorder are listed in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, 4th edition, (DSM-IV)¹. In making the diagnosis, clinicians often refer to neuro- vegetative symptoms, such as poor sleep, decreased interest, low energy, guilty feelings, and changes in appetite. In addition, depressed individuals may hold their bodies differently, sometimes barely moving and sometimes fidgeting excessively. Suicidal thoughts and behavior are the most alarming of these signs, although one need not be suicidal to be depressed. In general, an individual needs to experience a depressed mood as well as five neurovegetative symptoms to be considered clinically depressed. If anyone suffers severely from even one of the symptoms, however, a clinical treatment is often helpful. Obviously, suicidal tendencies in the absence of other symptoms are an emergency (Schlozman, 2001).

In general, depressed younger children voice more physical complaints than do their adolescent counterparts. These younger children might experience persistent headaches or stomachaches that often are mistaken for signs of an illness other than a depressed mood. In addition, younger children will often exhibit increased separation anxiety, and their overall behavior may seem somewhat regressed. As children approach

adolescence, those who suffer from depression start to resemble adults with the same illness. Because children spend so much of their time in the classroom, school personnel may be the first to notice when a student begins to act depressed. Although many of these behaviors are nonspecific and do not necessarily indicate depression, teachers are likely to notice students who start to act sad or reserved. Students with depression may become withdrawn or irritable. They might walk more slowly or with rounded shoulders, or they might seem persistently anxious and overwhelmed. Older children will often fail to respond to anything, including obviously funny or disruptive moments in class. Of course, teachers should make allowances for the normal fluctuations in mood that characterize healthy development. The child whose behavioral changes persist and clearly interfere with his or her development deserves extra attention (Schlozman, 2002).

Bowman (2003) in a recent study, reported that tens of thousands of New York City schoolchildren were suffering from depression, severe anxiety, and other mental-health disorders six months after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. The findings were turned up in a study of nearly 8,300 4th through 12th graders in the 1.1 million-student district. The children were surveyed in February and March by researchers and psychologists working with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. The study estimates that 10.5 percent of students in grades 4-12, or 75,000 youngsters, suffered symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder after the attack. Just over 60,000 students are estimated to have suffered from serious depression, nearly 74,000 from anxiety, and 107,000 from agoraphobia, which is the fear of being in or near public places.

Of the children with probable post-traumatic stress disorder, the report says roughly one-fifth sought help or counseling from a school counselor. For the study, about 900 students in each of the nine grades—who were randomly selected from a total of 94 schools throughout the city—filled out questionnaires. Students attending schools near "Ground Zero" of the terrorist attack in Lower Manhattan, and near the site of the crash last November of a commercial airliner in the Rockaways neighborhood in Queens, made up two-thirds of the survey sample. The rest attended schools in neighborhoods throughout the city (Bowman, 2003).

One of the primary questions researchers and district officials wanted to answer was whether the problems experienced by students since the Sept. 11 attack were unique to schools located closest to the World Trade Center. The answer was no. While children in schools at or very near Ground Zero were the most physically exposed to the event, those in schools outside that area were more likely to have family members who were at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, according to the report. They were also more likely to have experienced previous trauma. Both factors increased the likelihood of developing post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of Sept. 11, the researchers concluded (Bowman, 2003).

The Children's Health Fund (CHF), whose headquarters are in New York City and whose flagship mobile-based primary care programs are operated in partnership with the Children's Hospital at Montefiore, Bronx, N.Y., assisted in relief efforts from the first hours after the September 11th attack. Despite high expectations of physical casualties, including a possible inordinate impact on children, the number of survivors needing

medical attention was minimal. Essentially no immediate pediatric injuries were identified (Redlener, 2002).

On the other hand, it was clear that many children who witnessed any aspect of the terrorist attack, either directly or via the media, showed evidence of behavioral or psychological reactions to the events of 9/11 and the subsequent scare involving dissemination of anthrax spores through the mail. To determine the nature, extent, and distribution of the impact of these events on children and families in New York City, CHF commissioned a series of polls from the Marist Institute. The first poll was conducted between October 2 and October 4, three weeks after the attack. The second poll was completed on November 1 (coincident with the first reports of anthrax cases), and the third poll was completed on March 4, 2002, six months after the terror attacks. Each poll surveyed more than 400 randomly selected New York City parents of children between 4 and 18 years of age (Bowman, 2003).

It was clear from the earliest poll data that the majority of New York City children had strong reactions to the events of 9/11. More than half (52%) of parents reported that their children had become more concerned about their own safety and that of family members. The same percent feared an additional attack; their fears were realized several weeks later with the initial media reports of anthrax. Concern about safety spiked to 60% in response to the anthrax reports and stabilized at 52% on the third poll. Although the events of September 11 were unique, previous incidents of terrorism have also been studied, albeit not extensively. In a small study of the impact of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, investigators found a greater degree of stress among children directly involved than among those whose primary source of exposure was

media coverage. The latter did show mild stress symptoms on a standard measure (Bowman, 2003).

The findings of the CHF–Marist Institute polls regarding September 11 are consistent with studies of the most notorious previous incident of domestic terrorism, the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. Significant reactions among children were not limited by geographic proximity and persisted for years after the event. A probable factor was media exposure. Media coverage was even more intense after the Trade Center and Pentagon attacks than in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, with 24-hour cable news services covering the September 11 incidents incessantly (Redlener, 2002).

Experience with violence—whether as a witness or victim—is very common among urban youth, and is associated with increased rates of psychiatric symptoms, reports a study in the April 1999 issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. Violence exposure and psychiatric symptoms were assessed in a large group of sixth-, eighth-, and tenth-grade students. Separate studies performed in 1994 and 1996 included more than 2,600 youngsters each, including 1,100 subjects who participated in both studies. The research was led by child and adolescent psychiatrist Mary Schwab-Stone, M.D. of the Yale Child Study Center in New Haven, Conn (Redlener, 2002).

Children exposed to violence had increased rates of psychiatric symptoms. The link was especially strong for "externalizing" symptoms such as antisocial behavior and combativeness. However, violence also increased the risk of "internalizing" symptoms, such as anxiety and depression. Young people who reported exposure to violence at the

time of the first study were more likely to have both kinds of symptoms when studied again two years later (Redlener, 2002).

About half of the youths had been witnesses to violence, such as seeing someone chased, threatened, beaten, or wounded. More than one-third had been victims of violence, including five to ten percent who had been personally attacked or wounded. About half of the study group, drawn from an urban public school system, were from low-income families. About half were African-American and one-fourth Latino. The link between violence and psychiatric symptoms was strong for both boys and girls and across racial and ethnic groups. However, the responses to violence differed by age; in particular, sixth-graders exposed to violence were at higher risk of internalizing symptoms (anxiety and depression). Because of the many changes involved in entering adolescence, preteens may be particularly vulnerable and have less effective strategies for coping with stress, the researchers speculate (Redlener, 2002).

Redlener (2002) reported that in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., both adults and children are struggling with the emotional impact of such large-scale damage and losses of life. Other major acts of violence that have been felt across the country include the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City and the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. While these disastrous events have caught the Nation's attention, they are only a fraction of the many tragic episodes that affect children's lives. Each year many children and adolescents sustain injuries from violence, lose friends or family members, or are adversely affected by witnessing a violent or catastrophic event. Each situation is unique, whether it centers upon a plane crash where many people are

killed, automobile accidents involving friends or family members, or natural disasters such as the Northridge, California Earthquake (1994) or Hurricane Floyd (1999) where deaths occur and homes are lost—but these events have similarities as well, and cause similar reactions in children. Even in the course of everyday life, exposure to violence in the home or on the streets can lead to emotional harm.

Research has shown that both adults and children who experience catastrophic events show a wide range of reactions. Some suffer only worries and bad memories that fade with emotional support resolve themselves with the passage of time. Others are more deeply affected and experience long-term problems. Research on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) shows that some soldiers, survivors of criminal victimization, torture and other violence, and survivors of natural and man-made catastrophes suffer long-term effects from their experiences. Children who have witnessed violence in their families, schools, or communities are also vulnerable to serious long-term problems. Their emotional reactions, including fear, depression, withdrawal or anger, can occur immediately or some time after the tragic event. Youngsters who have experienced a catastrophic event often need support from parents and teachers to avoid long-term emotional harm. Most will recover in a short time, but the few who develop PTSD or other persistent problems need treatment (Richards, 1997).

Two months after the fire, a questionnaire answered by teachers and parents evaluated the impact of the disaster on the children. The procedure was repeated 8 months and 26 months later. Children menaced by the fire were underachieving in school at 8 months and 26 months in greater numbers than the control group children were. The children who were underachievers at 8 months had significantly more symptoms of

disorder than the children performing adequately in school. Significant morbidity did arise from the fire but did not become manifest until more than 2 months after the disaster. Most of the children were not seriously affected by the disaster, but traumatic life events clearly predicted psychological morbidity in children (Murray, 1992).

School personnel may be the first ones to have contact with children experiencing traumatic situations. Teachers might be first to notice the child exhibiting unusual behavior or "just not acting right." Due to the social stigma and financial cost of professional mental health care, school personnel may be the only resource for some children. Such a heavy burden of responsibility demands that school personnel become familiar with children's symptoms of PTSD and prepare possible coping strategies (Richards, 1997).

Grosse (2001) states that professional assistance is most important since PTSD can have a lifelong impact on a child. Symptoms can lie dormant for decades and resurface many years later during exposure to a similar circumstance. It is only by recognition and treatment of PTSD that trauma victims can hope to move past the impact of the trauma and lead healthy lives. Thus, referral to trained mental health professionals is critical. The school psychologist is a vital resource, and guidance counselors can be an important link in the mental health resource chain. Although professional assistance is ultimately essential in cases of PTSD, classroom teachers must deal with the immediate daily impact. Becoming an informed teacher is the first step in helping traumatized children avoid the life long consequences of PTSD.

In regard to the aspect of children's fears, Robinson, Rotter, Fey, & Robinson, (1991) state that fear can have a self-preserving and motivational quality or have an

inhibiting or debilitating effect. The numbers of untreated population often run as much as two times those of the treated population. In a recent survey of teachers in American international schools, the vast majority of teachers believed that children were adversely affected by fears and that as many as 50% were not functioning effectively at some time because of fear-related concerns (Robinson, 1991).

Children can be adversely affected by disasters and terrors. A traumatic event in a child's life can lead to fear-related problems that interfere with the child's normal functioning. A child who otherwise is functioning on a high level with regard to the concepts of control, self-worth, and security may develop reactions to specific fear objects in this way (Robinson, 1991).

Although the early years are critical in setting the stage for future development, the experiences of the school years are also important to children's healthy growth. During the school years, children develop the social and academic skills necessary to function as adults and citizens; violence at home or in the community takes a high toll. When children's energies are drained because they are defending themselves against outside dangers or warding off their own fears, they have difficulty learning in school. Children traumatized by violence can have distorted memories, and their cognitive functions can be compromised (Terr, 1999).

Children who are traumatized by violence may have difficulty seeing themselves in future roles that are meaningful. The California school children who were kidnapped and held hostage in their bus were found to have limited views of their future lives and often anticipated disaster (Terr, 1983). Children who cannot see a decent future for

themselves have a hard time concentrating on present tasks such as learning in school and becoming socialized (Wallach, 1994).

When children experience a trauma, a common reaction is to regress to an earlier stage when things were easier. This regression can be therapeutic by allowing the child to postpone having to face the feelings aroused by the traumatic event. It is a way of gaining psychological strength. However, when children face continual stress they are in danger of remaining psychologically in an earlier stage of development. Although what happens to them in the early years is very important, many children can overcome the hurts and fears of earlier times. For children living in an atmosphere of stress and violence, the ability to make relationships and get from others what they miss in their own families and communities is crucial to healthy development (Wallach, 1994).

Psychiatric trauma, or emotional harm, is essentially a normal response to an extreme event. It involves the creation of emotional memories about the distressful event that are stored in structures deep within the brain. In general, it is believed that the more direct the exposure to the traumatic event, the higher the risk for emotional harm. Thus in a school shooting, for example, the student who is injured probably will be most severely affected emotionally; and the student who sees a classmate shot, even killed, is likely to be more emotionally affected than the student who was in another part of the school when the violence occurred. But even second-hand exposure to violence can be traumatic. For this reason, all children and adolescents exposed to violence or a disaster, even if only through graphic media reports, should be watched for signs of emotional distress (Wallach, 1994).

Research shows that chronic exposure to violence adversely affects a child's ability to learn. Children who witness violence can display an array of emotional and behavioral disturbances, including low self-esteem, withdrawal, nightmares, self-blame, and aggression against peers, family members, and property. Learning itself is an essential tool for violence prevention. Children who achieve in school and develop important reading, critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills are better able to cope with stressful and perhaps dangerous situations. Also, academic achievement enhances the development of positive self-esteem and self-efficacy, both of which are necessary for children to experience emotional well being and to achieve success. The relationship between violence and learning is particularly significant because cognitive skills are crucial in terms of academic success, self-esteem, coping skills, and overall resilience (Wallach, 1994).

When children and youth are exposed to certain types of traumatic events, they are more likely to suffer long-term psychological consequences. Terrorist attacks, by their nature, are highly likely to lead to long-term psychological trauma. They typically involve deliberate mass violence, which studies have found to be extremely disturbing, leading to much more severe impairment than natural disasters or large-scale accidents.¹ In addition, if there is a continued threat of violence by terrorist groups, the trauma may persist long after an initial incident, due to an ongoing sense of uncertainty and lack of control (Figley, 1996).

Chemical and biological attacks may be particularly traumatizing, because people are likely to be uncertain about the extent of their exposure to potentially toxic agents and unsure about the long-term health effects of exposure. Unlike natural disasters or the

attacks on September 11th there may be no clear beginning or ending to disaster exposure. Some researchers have even asserted that the long-term psychological ramifications of chemical or biological terrorism may be more damaging than any physical effects.² Researchers have found that concerns or perceptions about exposure to radiation and toxic substances can have a powerful effect on psychological and physical health -- even when there has been no actual exposure National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, (2003)

Research on children and youth's responses to traumatic events suggests that a number of other factors are likely to influence the psychological response to terrorist attacks. Traumatic events are more devastating when they occur suddenly, without warning, when they occur at night, and when the number of deaths and injuries is high and the amount of damage is great (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2003).

In general, researchers have found that the more direct a child or youth's exposure to a traumatic event, in terms of both physical and emotional proximity, the higher the risk for emotional harm.⁶ Physical proximity refers to a child's level of involvement and physical distance from an attack. If a child witnessed destruction, mutilation, or death, if the child's life was in serious danger, or if the child suffered injuries, that child is at a greater risk for long-term psychological harm. In some situations, emotional proximity may be a stronger predictor of posttraumatic response than physical proximity.⁷ Emotional proximity refers to the level of emotional involvement with those injured or killed in an attack. Typically, the closer the relationship, the greater likelihood of long-term psychological problems. After the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, elementary

school-aged children who had lost a family member or had a family member injured experienced more post-traumatic stress symptoms than those who merely knew someone injured or killed in the blast (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2003).

Most research on psychological trauma has focused on the children and youth who are directly involved in traumatic events, ignoring the psychological effects of disasters on the wider community. However, children and youth can also develop psychological problems as a result of indirect transmission. Indirect transmission can occur through contact with other traumatized individuals, such as family members and peers, through the widespread effects of a traumatic event on a community, and through exposure to repeated media coverage of the event (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2003).

A study conducted with a group of children living within 100 miles of Oklahoma City found that 19% continued to have bomb-related difficulty in functioning two years after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. This finding is dramatic, because none of these children had been in physical proximity to the bombing site, and none knew anyone injured or killed in the attack. Indirect personal exposure (i.e., having a friend or family member who knew a victim) and the level of exposure to media coverage of the attack were both predictive of the amount of long-term psychological trauma experienced by these children. It is clear, then, that while children and youth who are directly involved in terrorist attacks are at greatest risk, other children and youth in the community are also at risk of long-term emotional harm as a result of terrorist violence (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2003).

Children and youth that have a history of victimization or exposure to violence, or that have recently experienced some other type of trauma or stress, are more vulnerable and are at greater risk for the development of psychological problems as a result of exposure to traumatic events. The National Survey of Adolescents suggests that an estimated 15.4 million adolescents in the United States have a history of exposure to violence and other potentially traumatic events. An estimated 5.8 million (or 26% of adolescents) have been victims of physical and sexual violence and an estimated 8.8 million (or 39% of adolescents) have been witnesses to violence. This widespread exposure to traumatic events may put a large percentage of children and youth in the United States at heightened risk for long-term emotional harm as a result of terrorist attacks (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2003).

Following a terrorist attack, a child or youth may be influenced by an array of secondary stressors and adversities that can increase the risk of developing psychological and psychiatric problems. A terrorist attack may lead to the loss of a home, separation from loved ones, relocation, parental unemployment, family disruption, fears of contamination, disrupted school activities, forced inactivity, and a loss of community/social supports (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2003). Exposure to reminders of an attack can also affect a child's recovery. Traumatic reminders in a child's environment or repeated exposure to media coverage can re-traumatize a child, increasing the likelihood of long-term psychological problems.

One of the key factors in determining a child's recovery after exposure to traumatic events is the availability of social support. The impacts of trauma are lessened when children and teens have a strong relationship with a parent or another competent

caring adult and have at least one place to go where they can feel safe. When children and teens do not have caring, supportive adults in their lives, they are less likely to recover quickly from traumatic events and may have lingering problems. Additionally, if parents are, themselves, traumatized and overwhelmed by the events, their children are much more likely to develop long-term symptoms. A review of disaster research found that parental psychopathology, when measured, was typically the best predictor of child psychopathology following a disaster. Children are highly sensitive to post-disaster distress and conflict in the family. Hence, while a family's reaction can buffer the negative effects of a trauma, providing a source of healing, it can also accentuate potential problems in a child's adjustment and coping after trauma and disaster.³¹ In fact, some researchers have concluded that providing care and support to overly stressed parents may be among (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2003).

Hamblen (2003) reports that studies have shown that deliberate violence creates longer lasting mental-health effects than natural disasters or accidents. The consequences for both individuals and the community are prolonged, and survivors often feel that injustice has been done to them. This can lead to anger, frustration, helplessness, fear, and a desire for revenge. Studies have shown that acting on this anger and desire for revenge can increase rather than decrease feelings of anger, guilt, and distress.

In addition, research reflective of the Oklahoma city incident indicated that two years after the bombing, 16% of children and adolescents who lived approximately 100 miles from Oklahoma City reported significant PTSD symptoms related to the event. This is an important finding because these youths were not directly exposed to the trauma and were not related to victims who had been killed or injured. PTSD symptomatology

was greater in those with more media exposure and in those with indirect interpersonal exposure, such as having a friend who knew someone who was killed or injured (Hamblen 2003).

The issue of media exposure by children was investigated by Hamblen (2003). She reported that until September 11th, the Oklahoma bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1995 was the most deadly terrorist act perpetrated on U.S. soil. One hundred sixty-eight people were killed, over 700 were injured, and more than 16,000 individuals in the downtown area were affected by the blast. In addition, approximately 12,000 people were involved in the rescue effort in a variety of different contexts. Because of the serious nature of this event, the media covered the bombing extensively (Hamblen, 2003).

Consequently, two-thirds of a large group of Oklahoman school children in grades 6 through 12 reported that, in the seven weeks after the bombing, "most" or "all" of their television viewing was bomb related. Children in this group who watched bomb-related television reported more PTSD symptoms seven weeks after the bombing than children who did not watch as much bomb-related television. This was true for children who lost an immediate family member and for those who did not lose a close family member. However, children who were related to a deceased victim reported more difficulty calming down after watching bomb-related television than children who did not lose a close family member (Hamblen, 2003).

Hamblen (2003) reports that similar results were found in a sample of over 2,000 middle school children (grades 6-8) from Oklahoma. Again, approximately two-thirds reported that "most" or "all" of their television viewing was bomb related. Interestingly,

television exposure was directly related to PTSD only in children who did not see, hear, or feel the explosion and who did not know anyone who was killed or injured in the explosion. These findings suggest two different possibilities. The first is that watching bomb-related television may contribute to an increase in PTSD symptoms. Alternately, it may be that the children who were the most distressed chose to watch bomb-related television.

According to Berger (2001), children may be particularly vulnerable to post traumatic stress disorder due to their more limited coping and communication skills, the powerful influence of media exposure such as television, and the often insufficient attention focused on early identification and intervention for children affected by traumatic events (Sampson, 2003).

The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, (2003) reports that people's reactions to violent events with loss of life vary greatly and there are no correct or incorrect responses. All survivors, including witnesses to the events, even those who only watched it on TV, may experience fear, disbelief, and helplessness in the initial days after the event. Over time they may experience, among other things, feelings of horror, anxiety, depression, and even numbness (lack of feelings). In addition, given the horrific experience of the current tragedy of 9/11, feeling of anger, blame, and rage may be common, along with feelings of irritability or even anger and violence against loved ones. Some may try to "calm down" by using alcohol or other substances. Children, like adults, may have difficulty sleeping or nightmares, and may avoid reminders of the events. They also may act out aspects of the events in their play, or avoid school, play, or being around other people.

Top security experts are advising schools to review and practice their crisis plans and to communicate emergency procedures to parents and students in response to this month's warning to the nation of an increased chance of terrorist attacks.

According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, researchers found that the prevalence of probable PTSD was significantly associated with the number of hours of TV coverage of the attacks that participants reported watching and with the number of different kinds of potentially traumatic events they reported seeing (Schlenger, 2001).

Prior to September 11th, the purpose of schooling, in the view of many educators, had been narrowed to train students in academic skills. The reputations of school districts rose or fell with their scores on state tests. The main thrust of the Bush administration's education reform that was then being developed was to make every school in America responsible for raising test performance for all students every year. School districts from Texas to California and Florida to New York reported they were focusing so much attention on raising test scores in math and reading that their teachers had little time for anything else (Colvin, 2002).

But that single-minded focus had to be re-examined as part of the aftermath of the attacks. While test scores and accountability are unlikely to disappear from the policy environment, schools and their leaders also are being asked to carry out a more complex agenda that serves broader civic goals and global issues. Now schools are explicitly being called on to teach an understanding of Islam, inculcate tolerance, foster a sense of community and instill patriotism—in addition to boosting test scores (Colvin, 2002).

Six months after September 11th, CNN reported that New York City Schools Chancellor Harold Levy authorized a \$500,000 research study to be conducted in order to determine the impact of 9/11 upon the students of New York City. The study was conducted by a joint collaboration between N.Y.U., Yale, and Columbia University in which a team of mental health professionals surveyed 94 New York City schools. The researchers went to an average of three randomly selected classrooms per school in grades four through twelve, spending forty-five minutes with each group of students in order to explain the questionnaire.

The study revealed that approximately 200,000 students were still experiencing serious mental health problems six months after September 11th. The study also noted that there were nearly 70,000 students suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and that nine out of ten students were suffering at least one symptom (Hoven, 2002).

The differing responses and the ways students may mask them, most experts say, put teachers, principals, and school psychologists on the front lines to ensure that students are screened for psychological disorders, that they receive professional help if needed, and that they begin to heal from events that otherwise could leave lifelong scars (Hoff, 2001).

Clearly, the evidence that children suffered from trauma, grief, and anxiety on September 11th was readily observed by most principals, psychologists, teachers, and parents. However, there is now a growing body of literature suggesting that many students continue to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety as a result of the attack on the World Trade Center. It is also suggested that this on-going depression and anxiety in children will significantly impact their academic achievement in school (Schlozman, 2001).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was designed to qualitatively analyze Superintendents perceptions concerning the impact of disaster and tragedy upon the role of their school organization. The specific design of this study will be conducted using telephonic interviews utilizing a set of standardized open-ended interview questions.

The standardized open-ended interview consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words. Flexibility in probing is more or less limited, depending on the nature of the interview and the skills of the interviewer. The standardized open-ended interview, in this case, is being used to minimize variation in the questions posed to the interviewees. This reduces the possibility of bias that comes from having different interviews for different people, including the problem of having more comprehensive data from certain persons while getting less systematic data from others. By controlling and standardizing the open-ended interview, the evaluator obtains data that are systematic and thorough for each respondent but the process reduces flexibility and spontaneity (Patton, 1990).

By utilizing the open ended questioning technique, this researcher does not presuppose which dimension of feeling or thought will be salient for the interviewees. The truly open-ended question allows the person being interviewed to select from among that person's full repertoire of responses. In this regard, this researcher is attempting to determine what dimensions, themes, images, and words people use to describe their feeling, thoughts, and perceptions concerning the topic. The truly open ended question will permit persons being interviewed to take whatever direction and use whatever words they want in order to represent what they have to say (Patton, 1990).

Research Design

The researcher chose to interview ten Superintendents from Hudson County within the State of New Jersey through a telephonic interview due to their proximity to the September 11th disaster in New York City.

In regard to this study the researcher will first send letters of solicitation to all Superintendents within each school district that has been randomly solicited for the study. Upon completion of this process for each of the twenty schools, this researcher will utilize the first ten respondents for this study. At that point each Superintendent will be contacted and an informed consent letter will be sent to them (Appendix C) in order to confirm our conversation and to provide him/her with information regarding the details and the process for this research study.

This letter will emphasize confidentiality, anonymity and procedural safeguards to insure their privacy. All participants will be asked to sign a form requesting permission for the use and release of anonymous audio taped responses.

In addition, all participants will be requested to sign a permission form allowing for the interviewer to use an audio recorder providing taped responses for anonymous transcription within the research study. It will be made clear that Superintendent's names and school districts will not be used in the study and that the audio tapes will be safeguarded, locked, and destroyed upon completion of the study.

In regard to the interview session, the researcher will develop a question route comprised of clear and concise questions that will be asked during the course of a one-hour telephonic interview session. The questions are to seem spontaneous, however, they will be the result of considerable thought and effort on the part of the researcher so as to induce a range of ideas and feeling that will provide insight into the area of investigation. These questions will be asked in a conversational manner and their wording will be forthright, direct, and simple (Krueger, 1998).

The researcher's ten heterogeneous subjects will be determined by those who choose to randomly participate in the research study after reviewing and consenting to the research procedure (Morgan, 1997). The researcher will develop a series of ten open-ended interview questions striving to solicit feelings, opinion, experience, knowledge, background, and sensory information (Patton, 1990). In addition, these questions will be constructed in a manner so as to solicit a range of ideas, perceptions, and perspectives as well as controlling for the issue of time frame by focusing on the present. These questions will be asked in the same sequence to each subject and in as much as possible, the same tone, directness, and inflection (Patton, 1990).

The researcher will begin the interview with questions about non-controversial present behaviors, activities, and experiences. Such questions ask for straightforward

descriptions; they require minimal recall and interpretation, and allow for the subjects to feel comfortable and secure. Such questions are, therefore, fairly easy to answer and encourage the respondent to talk descriptively (Patton, 1990).

Instrument Design

The ten one-hour telephonic interview sessions are comprised of fifteen questions designed to address the following categories: experience/behavior, opinion/value, feelings, and knowledge (Patton, 1990). The session will begin with an opening question that will seek to elicit a comfortable feeling between the interviewer and the interviewee. The next introductory segment of the interview will follow with open ended questioning that will encourage the interviewee to reflect upon past experiences that will allow him/her an opportunity to share their feelings regarding the issue under investigation. These questions will be followed by transition questions that connect the introductory questions with the more insightful key questioning. The key questions are what Krueger (1998) states will drive the study. This line of questioning will be open ended and require the interviewer to utilize probing and pausing techniques, which are beneficial as they elicit the need for more in-depth detail. The ending questions are used to bring closure to the interview session and to allow for any last attempts for discussion or additional insights. The entire interview session will be tape recorded, with permission for use from participants established prior to the interview, and anonymity assured by using numbered cards for each participant.

Setting

The date and time for each of the telephonic interview sessions will be set so as not to conflict with other functions or meeting. The research will take place from the

researchers home thus providing a comfortable, non-threatening location. The subject will have the option of receiving the call at home or the office.

Data Collection

The primary data of in-depth, open-ended interviews are quotations. What people say, what they think, how they feel, what they've done, and what they know. These are the things one can learn from talking to people in interviews. The purpose of qualitative evaluation is to understand the perspective and experience of people. The raw data of interviews are the actual quotations spoken by the interviewees. There is no substitute for these data (Patton, 1990).

The researcher addressed ten Superintendents within the County of Hudson in the State of New Jersey. They were instructed that the researcher would ask the necessary questions, and that he would bring the discussion back to the topic if need be. They were randomly assigned numbers that were coded one through ten upon completion of all sessions so as to insure anonymity. A tape recorder and note taking were used to accurately record responses for transcription and analysis. The researcher explained that at any time the interviewee wanted the tape recorder turned off they could do so (Patton, 1990).

A tape recorder is part of the indispensable equipment of evaluators using qualitative methods. Tape recorders do not "tune-out" conversations, change what has been said because of interpretation (either conscious or unconscious), or record words more slowly than they are spoken as well as increasing the accuracy of data collection (Patton, 1990).

Data Analysis

The interviewing process led the researcher to several significant responses from the participants regarding their perceptions of the impact of disaster and tragedy upon their school organization. Throughout the interviewing process there were many recurring themes and similar categories that emerged presenting valuable data in response to the purpose of this study as well as providing a framework for further research.

The most frequent responses as well as the recurring themes based on the subjects perceptions of the impact of disaster and tragedy upon their school organization are illustrated using a circle matrix (Appendix E) and are listed below:

- 1.Modification and upgrading of emergency management plans was the primary adaptation to the increased threat of terrorism and disaster in order to meet the needs of the students within their school community.
- 2.The majority of respondents now have several plans in place and practice them often. The overwhelming number of participants reported that new policy had been created and that the existing plan was inadequate to address such a crisis as September 11th.
- 3.Respondents indicated that if they have to evacuate their district they have no place to go.
- 4.Participant response suggested that they believe a percentage of students may still be experiencing emotional stress as a result of 9/11 and the on-going threat of terrorism.
- 5.The level of trauma was reported as being more severe for those students who lost family members and for those who because of proximity witnessed the event unfold.
- 6.Participant response indicated that no formal psychological screening was performed at any of the school districts.

7.Participants reported that they felt that the faculty suffered more psychological trauma than the children. Although this aspect was not the focus of the research it has emerged as significant within the framework of this study and will warrant further investigation.

8.Research findings within this study and relevant research indicate that there has been no curriculum modification in response to 9/11.

9.No district has reported any follow-up activities or programs for students or adults to investigate psychological issues related to stress and anxiety as a result of 9/11.

10.No district has reported any follow-up activities or programs for students or adults to determine the impact of September 11th on learning and academic achievement.

CHAPTER IV

Research Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Superintendents concerning the impact of disaster and tragedy upon the role of their school organization. Qualitative measures were utilized in the form of individual interviews in order to capture the perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of each subject. A questionnaire was designed and validated by a jury of experts consisting of fifteen questions seeking data to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent has disaster and tragedy impacted upon the role of the school organization?
2. To what extent has the recent 9/11 tragedy impacted upon the members of the school community?
3. To what extent has the role of the school organization adapted to the increased threat of terrorism and the risk of disaster in order to meet the needs of the students within their school community?

The primary themes within this investigation as reflected through the research finding suggest four main categories that have surfaced. These four categories as a reflection of the perceptions of superintendents regarding the impact of disaster and

tragedy upon their school organization include policy revisions, curriculum, program revisions, and psychological issues.

Within the first category of policy revisions, the primary response to the September 11th tragedy was reported as modifications and upgrading of their current crisis management policy. As a result of this tragedy, subjects reported that an upgraded emergency management plan was in effect and was practiced with significant frequency. The majority of respondents reported that their current plan was clearly inadequate to address a disaster of this magnitude and consistently reported the 9/11 disaster as raising their level of awareness to the importance of safety and security of their students. In addition, they stated that it helped them to identify many areas of weakness particularly in the large districts who are now aware that in the event of the need for an evacuation, they have no place to go.

The second category concerning the psychological issues as reported by the subjects within this study suggest that students may still be experiencing psychological distress in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder and trauma as a result of the massive media exposure of the 9/11 disaster as well as the loss of family and friends. In addition, no subject in any school district reported the implementation of psychological screening in order to address any of these concerns. Further findings within this category as reported by the subjects in all ten districts suggest that the primary response was to initiate the use of Child Study Teams as the primary crisis intervention unit. However, more than likely, they were not trained or prepared to effectively manage a trauma of this nature. In addition, participant response within this category suggests that teachers and

staff were also adversely affected by the 9/11 disaster and may require psychological intervention.

The third category as reported pertained to the implementation of revised curriculum as a result of the need to address global concerns in light of the recent 9/11 attack. The majority of subjects reported no modifications to their curriculum as a result of this disaster with only one district maintaining a voluntary Bible Study group.

The fourth category pertaining to program revisions produced minimal follow up from the majority of respondents with the exception of modifications to their Emergency Management Plans as mentioned earlier. In addition, it should be noted that other than immediate crisis intervention by Child Study Teams, no programs were initiated to screen students or staff for psychological trauma.

Research Question #1

To what extent has disaster and tragedy impacted upon the role of the school organization?

As a result of the interview process several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of interview questions 1, 3, 9, 10, and 12 pertaining to research question #1.

Responses from the majority of superintendents concerning the impact of tragedy and disaster upon their school district in interview questions #1 and #3 were consistently reported in similar statements such as, “causing us to look more closely at the overall picture of what’s going on in the schools concerning security and getting prepared for a disaster.” Another respondent stated that, “It really made us take a deeper look at what are our plans for any future disaster or evacuation.” While

still another reported that, “certainly it’s brought us all to an awareness of the importance of security and safety of our kids. As a result we have several plans now in place, we practice them, not that you can ever prepare for such a tragedy, but it certainly has brought an awareness that we have to be prepared for anything.”

The issue of proximity to the September 11th tragedy surfaced in several responses as many of the students and staff in this investigation witnessed the impact of the airplane collision into both towers as well as their eventual collapse. In addition, one superintendent stated that, “for the situation here in my district, it was critical because we were close to the activity. We were used as a holding spot for the flux of injured people that came in from New York City that were in the Liberty Science Center Area.” “Our whole gym was filled with hundreds of beds and all the emergency service agencies worked with us.” Another superintendent stated that, “it made this district become very aware of the need to have a safety committee within the district to be able to look at all the aspects of safety because as a result of September 11th our schools became an evacuation and triage center for the victims and survivors who came across the river.”

In this next response, one Superintendent not only captures the essence of the impact of tragedy and disaster upon his school organization but the true horror of the situation:

The plans were really a shortfall because we didn’t have a second place to evacuate, meaning that a school on the waterfront would evacuate to another school and that doesn’t work for us now because the other school could be only four or five

blocks away. Then that school could also be involved. The greatest problem in this district is that if we have to evacuate the entire district we have no place to go.

We've asked the emergency management teams in the county where we are supposed to go and there is no place for us to go with 37,000 kids and staff. There's no place for us to go. We would just have to get them on the highway and walk them west.

Within the context of research question #1, the issue of whether the school organization was prepared to deal with the recent September 11th tragedy was asked within interview question #9.

The majority of subjects responded that they were not prepared similarly in this manner; "we thought we were prepared and we did react the way we should have reacted but we were making those decisions as we had to whereas now those decisions are already planned out ahead of time. If one of us now is not in the school at the time the next person in charge will know exactly what to do." Another subject stated, "As well as we could have been I suppose but when you develop those plans you realize how little control you really do have even if you are somewhat prepared. It's like having a fire drill; you're hoping that it never happens and that you'll be able to get out but you practice that fire drill anyway."

While others were more direct stating, "to the extent that we had to prepare things on a dime, yes. Now in the event of a terrorist attack we practice drills and if it was to happen again we are better prepared because we know what we need to do now to a certain extent."

Within interview question #10, the responses were reported most consistently as stated by this subject, "aside from providing the staff with immediate support from

our Child Study Team and the re-development of our Emergency Management Plan, I would say nothing more.”

Question #12, as the final question pertaining to research question #1 concerning the impact of September 11th upon the Superintendent’s role as an instructional leader, produced similar and consistent patterns ranging from having no impact to raising the level of importance of global education for students. One superintendent stated that, “as an instructional leader I think we have to prepare our students for what’s happening globally. In a sense, I mean going back to the dark ages when I was in school, very little that I remember was taught about the Middle East and we really overlooked that whole area, what they were and what they stood for. We studied Europe and Asia, but now the students really need to know about the entire spectrum of cultures and religions. This is something we have put into our curriculum now and it has changed the way geography and social studies are taught today.”

Research Question #2

To what extent has the recent 9/11 tragedy impacted upon the members of the school community?

As a result of the interview process several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of interview questions 2, 4, 8, and 11 pertaining to research question #2.

Within the framework of Research Question #2 the responses given for interview question #2 concerning the impact of 9/11 upon the students, the responses were consistently reported in a similar manner as the students being severely traumatized to

having a minimal effect. The level of trauma was reported as being more severe for those students who lost family members and for those who because of proximity witnessed the event unfold.

This response from one subject regarding the impact of September 11th upon his students captures the essence of Research Question #2:

Well, I think 9/11 had a profound effect upon our kids. I've seen the short-term effects, which were obvious, and we're still seeing the long-range effects today. We've noticed that the children were reacting with nightmares long after the event. The young children came to realize that Mommy, Daddy, and the principal couldn't protect us from these terrible events. In our town it really reminded me of what would have been a nuclear event. Particularly in our town and most of Hudson County saw the entire event unfold and our kids were really devastated. That's what our trip to Chicago was all about. How we dealt with the incident and the difficult time we went through.

Another consistent theme that emerged from interview question #2 was that of immediate crisis counseling that was offered to students within the following days of the tragedy. Subject #3 reported the following:

Our students in downtown saw the tragedy, they could see it from the school building. Plus at the higher points in town they could really see it. It made them aware of what a tragedy is all about. We had quite a few counseling sessions for the children. We had parents of children, friends of children, relatives of children killed over there. We had a lot of people who were there who participated in the

tragedy and survived and we had to provide teams of psychologists, social workers, so that the kids would be able to adjust to the whole thing.

Interview question #4 addressed the issue of the changes made to address the psychological needs of the students as a result of 9/11 within the context of Research Question #2. The responses of most subjects consistently reported on-going counseling, consultants, art therapists, and Child Study Team members as the primary resource utilized to address these concerns. Subject #3 reported the following:

“Well, we’ve had art projects within the schools developing quilts, a lot of counseling about what they saw and heard and how it affected their families. We also took part with the FBI who told our faculty to listen to the kids because they would provide valuable information that we could use because our school is so diverse. The police and the FBI then received many leads from our students that helped them solve their case. From what little kids say in the classroom, nothing that they said was dismissed and a lot of it really helped the government in their case. We’ve had some faculty who has had a hard time adjusting because of the tragedy itself. In fact, we have had a person retire from the district on a medical as a result of it. They couldn’t deal with the trauma. All our teams have now been trained in crisis management.”

However, three subjects reported that they felt that the faculty suffered more psychological trauma than the children. Interestingly, this is a response that also was reported by other subjects in other interview questions and will be addressed in more detail in Chapter 5. The following excerpt from Subject #5 supports this emerging theme:

The immediate trauma issues were addressed in open discussions, we had some counselors come in and discuss the concerns of students individually and in large groups. I actually think we had more traumas from teachers. At least they voiced more of their concerns and they were concerned for the kids too. But it was worse in the downtown center than in the uptown center.

In interview question #9, the issue of the psychological impact of 9/11 on the students and the effect on their academic performance was explored within the framework of Research Question #2.

This was the first question within the questionnaire that explored the issue of the impact of trauma upon the student's academic performance and the majority of the respondents reported that this was an area that was tough to identify and they had not investigated or considered. Most of the respondents believed that the impact on academic performance was minimal and temporary and that for the most part children are resilient and will recover quickly. The following response illustrates this point:

What I tried to do was put the full focus not on the putting your head under the desks but focusing on moving forward. I really don't think it's had an effect. Our inner city kids are resilient and it bothered some of them for a month or so but they have just moved on. If you live in the projects and believe me 9/11 isn't going to bother you that much. It's had an economic effect and maybe a psychological effect for a few months.

However, a few did report otherwise as believing that there would indeed be a residual effect:

Hopefully, any effect it may have upon their academic achievement is positive. Psychologically, I think that would be pretty tuff to measure. I think it definitely had a psychological effect on students and staff and they are very aware of it. Now our kids are the ones who will be growing up with this apprehension and the fear of every time we go to a Code Red or Orange, it has to take its effect on them. Even in this area, traveling through tunnels and bridges, things that we do quite frequently being so close to New York.

Interview question #11, as the final question directly addressing Research Question #2, seeks information as to the extent that the events of September 11th have impacted upon the school community. Overall, the responses consistently reported that there was no escaping the trauma, particularly within the first few days and that they continue to feel extremely vulnerable due to their proximity. Subject #2 clearly stated the following in his response to interview question #11:

“I think it has had a lasting effect and again I think it has to do with how vulnerable we are as a community not only because of our proximity but I think everyone in the country felt they were vulnerable and the world has now changed and its not as secure as it once was.”

Research Question #3

To what extent has the role of the school organization adapted to the increased threat of terrorism as well as the risk of disaster in order to meet the needs of the students within their school community?

As a result of the interview process several overarching themes have been identified upon analysis of interview questions 5, 6, 7, 13, and 14 pertaining to research question #3.

Question #5 addressed the issue changes made to the curriculum in the area of religious and global concerns. The majority of responses given clearly indicated that no changes have been made to their curriculum and that in some cases they felt that their curriculum was already incorporating global and religious issues into programs and disciplines. Subject #2 responded in the following manner:

We haven't changed the curriculum specifically for that reason but our curriculum continues to evolve and we do cover world religions but I don't think it has imposed a major change in our curriculum.

One respondent however reported the following in regard to the religious issue: Again, as far as the religious issues, over the past two years we have had a Genesis Club formed in our high school where the kids are becoming more aware of world religions and they themselves have formed the club and have recruited a teacher to be the moderator. It's very interesting! They get together during lunch hour and they study world religions and the impact of religion and it all came from them. We haven't seen this in a long time and its all-volunteer and very low key and they do their thing."

In interview question #6 the subjects were asked if policy had been created to address future acts of terrorism. The majority reported that policy had been in place to address emergency situations, however, after the 9/11 tragedy, policies needed to be revised and expanded in order to deal with multiple scenarios. The

response of Subject #3 illustrates a common theme throughout this particular question route:

We've gone for some extensive training both here with the local police and outside agencies. We've developed a whole policy about "Stay in Place." A lot of times if someone is going to bomb a building they attempt to cause a rush of panic so people will run into an area that they are going to detonate. We had an extensive number of bomb threats and as a result we developed a whole new bomb threat procedure after 9/11. We had one building that received a hundred and something bomb threats and the new policy was able to curtail it. We inspect every building every day; we put in metal detectors in our high schools and middle schools to protect our kids.

Subject #9 further supports this common theme as outlined in question #6 in the following response:

We have our new handbook. If we have to close up and evacuate our school, we have plans. If we have to lock it down, we have plans. We have locations as to where to meet and everyone in the building has a copy. We have information from the Office of Emergency Management as what to do in a step-by-step format in the event of a disaster of any kind. It's somewhat reassuring but you never know how people will react in an emergency.

In interview question #7, the subjects were asked directly if their school was prepared for another terrorist attack. They all reported in this case that they believed that they were, to a certain extent. Although they have now responded to the 9/11 disaster with an increase in security measures and detailed Emergency

Management Plan, they also recognized that to a certain degree you can never really be ready for another disaster of a similar magnitude. The following excerpt from Subject #2 illustrates a common theme:

I hope we are! As I said we've had lockdowns and we are a small town and we work very well with the police and fire departments. We have an agreement with them, they come in once a year and they speak to the teachers about possible terrorist attacks, what could happen, etc. Anyway, it's an open discussion and they talk about what we should do in an emergency. This is something that never would have been done before and it's done not to make the teachers paranoid but to simply let them know what we'll do in the event of an emergency. So we work quite closely with them and they are in our schools on a regular basis.

Combined Subject Responses to Each Question

Question One

How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

Subject 1

Well, I think it has caused us to look at the overall picture of what's going on in the schools concerning security, getting each school prepared for a disaster, because our town is one of the towns near the waterfront. Actually from the third floor of our building you were able to watch the entire tragedy unfold. We only had one student who lost a parent but we had quite a few policemen from our town that went over to New York and were injured. It really made us take a deeper look at what are our plans for any future disaster or evacuation. We've had lock down drills for the children over the past three years but this has really given us a sense of reality.

Very good, next question.

Subject 2

Well certainly it's brought us all to an awareness of the importance of security and safety of our kids. As a result we have several plans now in place, we practice them, not that you can ever prepare for such a tragedy, but it certainly has brought an awareness that we have to be prepared for anything.

Ok, that's fine.

Subject 3

It made this district become very aware of the need to have a safety committee within the district to be able to look at all the aspects of safety within the district because as a result of September 11th our schools became an evacuation and triage center for the victims and survivors who came across the river. Everything from New York was dumped over into our district. All the boats and ferries came over to our side. They dumped them off in Liberty State Park so we had to mobilize our school buses. We had to mobilize our staff, our crisis intervention people; we mobilized the staff in general, security, and food service. So what we did after this whole tragedy took place we developed what we call an EMQ, an emergency management quick book and in it provides directions for every single emergency procedure we could think of, a step-by-step procedure for action. Take for example a chemical fallout, I take this quick book and I open to chemical fallout and the first thing we do is to enact our Code 105 which is to stay in place because you don't want people out in the air.

Right, right!

You then notify the Superintendent, the Associate Superintendent, and Security from your division, you notify the nurse for any medical situations and you shut off the ventilation system. Then lock all windows and doors, any unoccupied rooms, closets, and lounges and begin the emergency phone chain. So that every principal or whoever was in charge would follow the same procedure. This EMQ has everything you could think of, weapons in school, suspicious intruder, fire and gas emergencies, death on the premises, hazardous, materials, riots, utility failures.

Wow!

It really extends beyond 9/11 and provides us with a unified procedure to respond to any emergency. We've given this EMQ to local and state authorities and they have taken it and they are using it as a template to develop their own. In parts of the quick book, it also has phone numbers on pages that can be removed easily so it's a living document that can be updated every year.

Subject 4

For the first month it was negative since then minimal. Our students have their own 9/11 on a weekly basis. When your relatives are being incarcerated, there are fights going on, the police are in all the time what happened in New York is just a memory. There is so much going on in their own lives on a daily basis that 9/11 is just something that happened in a foreign land. There were some students who had trouble sleeping at night and the local newspaper came in and did a story.

Very good, that's powerful.

Subject 5

I would think that safety and security comes to mind more often now. Would you believe that our kids were scheduled to go on a field trip to the World Trade Center on the day of the incident? So we have more of a lump in our throat about it and it was at 9:00am that the bus was just getting ready to leave. The event had already taken place but we could have been there. Now whenever we go to New York or anyplace we definitely think of safety first.

Ok, that's fine.

Subject 6

The way it impacted upon me as an administrator was in the area of security, making sure the building were safe. It really opened our eyes to the reality that a catastrophic event could actually take place. We really put in motion our emergency management plans so that we would be prepared for germ warfare, a catastrophic accident, or any other sort of emergency.

Very good

Subject 7

Well, we had to be concerned about the student body and the faculty in our school because they had relatives who were working over there. We tried to keep everyone as calm as possible. It turned out that there was a large contingency of doctors close to our school in the Convention Center and we were asked to bus them to a site that was set up as a triage for injured patients at Liberty Science Center. Of course we helped with that and then we had to get calls out to parents and that was difficult to do, as you know. We tried to act as quickly as we could keeping everyone calm.

Wow, that sounds frightening.

Subject 8

I think my role is always somehow so indirect and I think that's how I would start it. I will say that because of our location, September 11th was an unbelievably difficult day for us. Every school in the district saw the towers fall. I didn't see it because my office faces a different direction. But we had a couple thousand kids see them fall and we did have a traumatic day and we were asked to go out last February and speak about our experiences in Chicago at a convention that was being held.

Many of the things that we did that day were simply spontaneous. We could turn any corner in our town for weeks and see the smoldering buildings. So it had a really profound impact on us. We also applied for a major grant and were given \$100,000 for enhanced security.

That's great.

Subject 9

Well, it had a great impact. As an educator we are really an extension of New York City here and we had a lot of parents who were involved with the event itself and we had to deal with the immediacy of the tragedy. We were in school and the radio was on and the school psychologist told us. At that point we were all focused on listening and watching television and of course we were all stunned. We didn't know what parents were over there and who was injured and that was a horrible experience as could be expected. Then what happened after of course the turmoil lasted for weeks and we decided we had to have a better emergency action plan. We had meeting for weeks trying to develop a more comprehensive plan that would better prepare us for a tragedy or disaster.

Was this at the district level?

Actually each school developed their own plan based on the individual needs of the school. In fact we developed a whole emergency kit. We have gallons of water, flashlights and medical supplies. We made a list of what everyone wanted and we read literature of what should be in an emergency kit. Oh, and duct tape, that was a big thing too.

Ok, next question.

Subject 10

Well, for the situation here in my district, it was critical because we were close to the activity. We were used as a holding spot for the flux of injured people that came in from New York that were in the Liberty Science Center Area. Our whole gym was filled with hundreds of beds and all the emergency service agencies worked with us.

That's incredible.

Our town has a very cohesive relationship with the men in blue so we worked together very well on that day. Our food services supported the people that were here. Our local restaurants donated a tremendous amount of food. When it was time for the people to leave we provided bussing for them. Our town was locked; you couldn't get in or out. So anyone that was here was stuck. We even brought food to people on Kennedy Boulevard who were locked in for hours. So it was quite a commitment on our part and personally I was very involved because my son was over there and I didn't know where he was.

That sounds pretty scary.

On that day, we have a local television broadcast and I sent out a message that all parents should come and pick up their children because we didn't know what parents were over there. I told all the principals that no child is to go home unless a child is picked up by a parent. We have an automated telephone service that was put into effect right away and parents were told to come and pick up their children. The kids could have gone home a minute after we gave the release but no children was permitted to walk home because we didn't know what they were walking home to.

That was a good move.

Yeah, because a lot of people work in New York here. But we kept our heads together.

Ok

Question Two

To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

Subject One

Well, I think the students themselves accepted it much better in the lower grades and for them it was just another world event. We really did try to play it up with teachers as far as the scope of the tragedy and the impact it would have on the country. In the upper grades I think it really gave them a greater sense of reality. Also, we've had our share of students who have graduated and have gone on to serve in the military over in Iraq as a result of 9/11 making them more conscious of the world community.

Ok.

Subject Two

You know I hate to say this because our building witnessed it and that's something we touted, all of our kids watched everything unfold and when the second plane hit everyone watched in disbelief. However, we are a K-8 school and luckily none of our families were directly affected by a loss of parents or sibling. We did of course have faculty members who had friends who were affected or perished. It didn't hit home to the point where a particular family of ours were really suffering a lot. But we did arrange for counseling in the weeks following but other than the kids having a need to express how they felt about it I think they have moved on. The idea at the time when the President was telling everyone to go about his or her normal life that was exactly what we were encouraging.

Ok

Subject Three

Our students in downtown saw the tragedy, they could see it from the school building. Plus at the higher points in town they could really see it. It made them aware of what a tragedy is all about. We had quite a few counseling sessions for the children. We had parents of children, friends of children, relatives of children killed over there. We had a lot of people who were there who participated in the tragedy and survived and we had to provide teams of psychologists, social workers, so that the kids would be able to adjust to the whole thing.

That sounds traumatic!

It really was.

Subject Four

Again, I believe it's minimal because in their lives the bleakness of their lives is similar to what may have went on in Bagdad. Despite the fact that we were in open trailers then and could smell the smoke and we heard the ambulances.

Ok

Subject Five

Well, the downtown school in the Video Production Class they actually filmed the second plane hitting the tower and all of our students were able to see the smoke and the event as it was unfolding. We did have many meeting with the kids and the teachers about 9/11 because we thought there would be some residual effect.

Interesting.

Subject Six

It seemed to have a greater impact on those students whose parents, relatives, and friends were killed, injured, or involved in some way in the World Trade Center. So in that sense they were impacted more by the event than the other students.

In some cases teachers were more effected than the students. I lost a cousin in the World Trade Center and we had other teachers who also lost family members. There was definitely a residual effect.

Ok.

Subject Seven

Well, two of them had lost family members in the tragedy and some of the students had difficulty sleeping at night.

Ok

Subject Eight

Well, I think 9/11 had a profound effect upon our kids. I've seen the short-term effects, which were obvious, and we're still seeing the long-range effects today. We've noticed that the children were reacting with nightmares long after the event. The young children came to realize that Mommy, Daddy, and the principal couldn't protect us from these terrible events. In our town it really reminded me of what would have been a nuclear event. Particularly in our town and most of Hudson County saw the entire event unfold and our kids were really devastated. That's what our trip to Chicago was all about. How we dealt with the incident and the difficult time we went through.

OK, next question.

Subject Nine

Being a special school for multiply handicapped students they really had no awareness of what was going on. There were a few that had an idea that something serious was going on and they pretty much forgot about it the next day. Very few really could grasp it. Then when they went home and came back the next day they were fine. There were two staff members who had family members who had been killed and that was difficult to deal with. None of the students had immediate family who were injured or killed which was great. Absolutely.

Subject Ten

If you are on the third floor in some of the schools in our town you can see the New York skyline very clearly. There were some kids who just happened to get up and happened to see the collapse and that was very traumatic for them.

Ok

Question Three

How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

Subject One

Yes, as I said we are more aware now and it seems like we're getting back to the era of Vietnam, we are the big brother to the world and as we educate our kids and in our town we always had a strong turnout for the military. They have always done a lot of recruiting in our schools and for many of our students it's a good follow-up and they go on to train and see the world. But today it's a little different; they know they are destined to serve in a conflict.

Very good.

Subject Two

Again, after witnessing the entire tragedy itself its brought an awareness of what we need to do to really prepare the kids and I think initially there was a great deal of unity, and I think that part of that has lasted since then.

Great!

Subject Three

Well you know that the first thing we said was school is in session until three o'clock. Now that impacted on the staff because they have family members over there. We shut off all televisions in the schools because we didn't want the kids to see that going on and on and on.

Many schools didn't do that.

We did it because we had staff with husbands and wives working there as well as children working there. Their primary responsibility was the kids in their classroom because we didn't know if the wind would shift or if there would be attacks in our city. We had to minimize the exposure and then we had to evacuate a few schools to other building because the wind shifted. We didn't know if it was toxic and we had to enact our emergency evacuation plans. The plans were

really a shortfall because we didn't have a second place to evacuate to meaning that a school on the waterfront would evacuate to another school and that doesn't work for us now because the other school could be only four or five blocks away. Then that school could also be involved. The greatest problem in this district is that if we have to evacuate the entire district we have no place to go.

That's a scary thought.

We've asked the emergency management teams in the county where we are supposed to go and there is no place for us to go with 37,000 kids and staff. There's no place for us to go. We would just have to get them on the highway and walk them west.

What about the buses?

We don't have enough.

We have maybe fifty buses in the district.

So you rotate them?

Yeah, since our schools were involved in the evacuation we had to open the schools with people still occupied there waiting for flights out of the area. So we had to run school while we still had survivors in the buildings.

Subject Four

There are many people in our district who really reacted strongly to the event of 9/11 and I think may have even over-reacted thereby adding additional stress.

Ok

Subject Five

I don't think we have changed things organizationally. I mean we are more conscious of policies now regarding safety and trips and look at them a little more closely. But other than that I don't really think anything else has changed.

Very good

Subject Six

I don't think it really impacted upon the school organization in terms of being cognizant of emergency management plans and the various groups that we were involved with during the crisis.

Fine.

Subject Seven

I think everyone worked really well together and of course we couldn't let the kids go home until their parents came to pick them up. We had students here until late at night and then you had the problem with the tunnels. So our town was caught in the middle but everyone pulled together.

That's great.

Subject Eight

Initially, there was a tremendous amount of security with the implementation of our Emergency Management Plan. Also, I have been working with the town emergency management team including things as mundane as hurricanes and power outages, etc. I meet with one of the detectives in our town on a regular basis to keep the board up to speed on what are the priorities.

I'll give you an example. At the high school we are on one square block and we have an underground parking lot, which the police have identified, as a very dangerous place. Because if you think about what could occur in that spot. Of course we keep that quiet. But the fact of the matter is, it's a very dangerous spot and could literally put our building down. So we're very concerned about that. We do, however, have very tight security in that area and have signs posted and everyone that parks in that area have stickers on their car. In fact, I was given a warning notice for parking in there and I congratulated the security guard.

Its funny, the money that we received from the grant did not permit us to buy security cameras, so we wound up giving \$40,000 back.

That seems strange.

Subject Nine

Overall, I think the school organization dealt with the entire tragedy quite well. Given the circumstances I don't think there was much we could do at the time other than keep the students safe until their parents came to pick them up.

Very well

Subject Ten

We used our guidance counselors to work with the students and staff to provide services for the students and staff since some staff lost family members.

Very good.

Question Four

What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

Subject One

Well, I would say the psychological changes are subtler. We've discussed it at In-Service workshops as far as making our students more aware of the world situation and what can happen in our country now and how we never thought we could have a disaster of this magnitude on our shores, not to mention so close to us. We are only twenty minutes from New York City. We've started to think about bio-terrorism and things of this nature.

Yes, I agree, that's what really scares me.

And you read in the newspaper about these diseases that we know of and then there are those that we haven't even thought of yet. That sort of scares me and you try not to dwell on these things with the kids because you don't want them to be afraid to lead normal lives. I think it should really be a subtler undertone in the curriculum making them aware of the world situation.

Subject Two

We have a consultant who visits the school one day a week and she works with kids whether it be in small groups or one on one.

Ok

Subject Three

Well, we've had art projects within the schools developing quilts, a lot of counseling about what they saw and heard and how it affected their families. We also took part with the FBI who told our faculty to listen to the kids because they would provide valuable information that we could use because our school is so diverse. The police and the FBI then received many leads from our students that helped them solve their case. From what little kids say in the classroom, nothing that they said was dismissed and a lot of it really helped the government in their case. We've had some faculty who has had a hard time adjusting because of the tragedy itself. In fact, we have had a person retire from the district on a medical as a result of it. They couldn't deal with the trauma. All our teams have now been trained in crisis management.

Great!

Subject Four

Well, in the last two hours we had a first grader who had to leave school because of a psychological problem. I think his mother is a drug dealer. We had two girls in peer mediation that had a fist fight last week and we just had a boy who threw a pencil in the eye of another student. Nothing really seemed to affect them after 9/11 because so much is going on in their lives. They have so much baggage that I think that in a more stable community 9/11 may have had a more negative effect.

I understand.

Just one more thing. When your uncle just got murdered last night, and your living with your grandmother, your dad's in jail, and your mother just hopped on a bus to Texas, its all relative.

Wow! I can't believe that.

Subject Five

The immediate trauma issues were addressed in open discussions, we had some counselors come in and discuss the concerns of students individually and in large groups. I actually think we had more traumas from teachers. At least they voiced more of their concerns and they were concerned for the kids too. But it was worse in the downtown center than in the uptown center.

Great, next question.

Subject Six

I don't think there were any changes but there were counselors and crisis management people available to them. In my experience I didn't really observe any great psychological changes over that period of time. Initially, yes, but I didn't see it over the long run.

That's fine.

Subject Seven

Well, of course we made available the members of the Child Study Team and we let the parents know that if their children were having any serious problems we had people at school who could help them.

Very good.

Subject Eight

We have all the standard support mechanisms in place and we put heavy emphasis on counseling in the high school. We still have visits from counselors who assist students who are still struggling with issues and we really do think the event of 9/11 has had serious effects on many students, particularly this feeling of insecurity that this impenetrable nation is now vulnerable. It really changed our outlook on things. Our town witnessed the entire day and had clear view unlike many of the other towns. It was a surreal experience. We had kids saying to the teachers that the towers didn't fall; it was the building next to it. They were in complete disbelief and denial.

After speaking with other superintendents in the county, their responses of what they experienced was very different than ours because we had such a clear view. Our experience was so much more traumatic. I have to tell you when the first building fell I really had to take a few minutes to gain my composure. After that I locked down all the building, I didn't let any kids go home until we were sure that this wasn't a nation wide plot. We had police out front of the schools for weeks. It was really a horrible day and we didn't what to do. I tell people all the time you could have a perfect emergency management plan but what really made the difference for us was the experience of our veteran people.

That day it was all about veteran educators who managed the building and made the right the decisions.

That's incredible.

Subject Nine

I have to say that in general there was no impact upon our students given their limited ability and I would have to say that the ones that were really impacted psychologically were the adults.

Ok, next question.

Subject Ten

Well actually, we put support in where we would see difficulty, the counselor was always available and where we saw there was very serious psychological trauma we referred them to outside services.

That's fine.

Question Five

To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

Subject One

Again, as far as religious issues, over the past two years we have had a Genesis Club formed in our high school where the kids are becoming more aware of world religions and they themselves have formed the club and have recruited a teacher to be their moderator. It's very interesting! They get together during lunch hour and they study world religions.

Wow! You don't see that in many schools.

Subject Two

We haven't changed the curriculum specifically for that reason but our curriculum continues to evolve and we do cover world religions but I don't think it has imposed a major change in our curriculum.

Thank you.

Subject Three

No, no real changes have been made.

Fine.

Subject Four

No, absolutely not. As you know here in New Jersey everything is GEPA and ESPA and we don't have enough time in the day because these things are dictated by the State. Our test scores when I became principal were quite low and the bulk of our time is spent trying to get kids to be more civil and educate to read and write. We really have to reflect an increase in our test scores or we can lose considerable funding.

Subject Five

I'm trying to think because I have covered curriculum recently and I don't really recall any curricular changes that have taken place. I think we are more sensitive to diversity and cultures. I mean we always were, our kids come from very diverse backgrounds. We're pretty open to this.

Very good

Very good

Subject Six

No, because I think the Core Content Standards and what we were doing prior to September 11th was on target but certainly after 9/11 and the onset of war teachers have generated discussions concerning the issue of war but no major curricular changes.

Subject Seven

I think some of that is covered in Social Studies but I'm not sure. We write the curriculum but I think an emphasis has been written to focus on global issues to help our students better understand what goes on around the world.

Fair enough.

Subject Eight

The big change was really the modification of our EMP and outlined every possible emergency we could come up with and came up with a list of things that everyone should be doing from contacting the police to initiating the emergency telephone chain and so on. I've been in many tragic incidents in my life as an administrator and every one of those events was unique in its own way. I can probably write a book.

You probably should.

Yeah, you're right.

Subject Nine

I really would say there has been none based on the specific needs of our curriculum.

Ok

Subject Ten

Well, we have quite a few Arabic children and we teach Character Education as part of our overall curriculum and we try to teach everyone that they are unique and that we all are special people who need to respect one another and that's called being an American.

Great.

Question Six

Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

Subject One

I think I have touched upon those in previous questions as far as our overall awareness and our providing faculty with increased workshops as well as our relationship with the police and fire departments.

Ok

Subject Two

Yes and that would be again the emergency procedures that we have in place and policies regarding conduct of individuals in the building and to insure their safety. Basically its pretty much a no tolerance as far as the behavior and role of adults, we really hold them accountable to a very high standard.

Subject Three

We've gone for some extensive training both here with the local police and outside agencies. We've developed a whole policy about "Stay in Place." A lot of times if someone is going to bomb a building they attempt to cause a rush of panic so people will run into an area that they are going to detonate. We had an extensive number of bomb threats and as a result we developed a whole new bomb threat procedure after 9/11. We had one building that received a hundred and something bomb threats and the new policy was able to curtail it. We inspect every building every day; we put in metal detectors in our high schools and middle schools to protect our kids.

Excellent.

Subject Four

There are a lot of policies in the Office of Emergency Management and how we need to evacuate them in an emergency situation in the event there was a chemical event.

OK, very good.

Subject Five

I don't know. We started to get together a lot of things. I mean 9/11 really precipitated actions in the area of crisis management. We were into it before 9/11

a little and after the incident we really investigated further programs but it sort of died. We did come up with a crisis plan that we didn't have before.

Ok, that's fine.

Subject Six

No, just in the way of procedures and how we handle catastrophic events, that the only real change that has been made. Of course, looking at our own school security.

Next question.

Subject Seven

Of course, we did drills in the school and we worked with the police. We set up the whole system as to what to do if something like this happens again. We had the police come in and review the layout of the building and we also designated where the kids should go in an emergency. For example, if something happened at one end of town, the school would evacuate to the other end of town.

Ok, next question.

Subject Eight

Aside from upgrading the EMP, none that I can think of.

Subject Nine

We have our new handbook. If we have to close up and evacuate our school, we have plans. If we have to lock it down, we have plans. We have locations as to where to meet and everyone in the building has a copy. We have information from the Office of Emergency Management as what to do in a step-by-step format in the event of a disaster of any kind. It's somewhat reassuring but you never know how people will react in an emergency.

You're right.

Subject Ten

Well actually, we had a plan and under the circumstances we had to beef up the plan as a result of September 11th. We created a more extensive plan and I have participated in a sort of SWAT team activity in the event of an intruder. We also worked with the Merck Corporation located on the waterfront that also participated in revised emergency management procedures.

Interesting.

Question Seven

Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

Subject One

I hope we are! As I said we've had lockdowns and we are a small town and we work very well with the police and fire departments. We have an agreement with them, they come in once a year and they speak to the teachers about possible terrorist attacks, what could happen, etc. Anyway, it's an open discussion and they talk about what we should do in an emergency. This is something that never would have been done before and it's done not to make the teachers paranoid but to simply let them know what we'll do in the event of an emergency. So we work quite closely with them and they are in our schools on a regular basis.

Fine

Subject Two

Again, I don't think you can ever say 100% for sure you will be prepared but we have everything in place. In other words we have a safe haven and we practice going to that place and fortunately it is a bomb shelter. We practice and have other policies in place.

Subject Three

O yeah! We are prepared and of course if it happens we've designated a secondary site for the Board of Education building. We have developed a secondary form of communication because we lost our cell phones and repeater system. So we developed a means of communication by a messenger.

Wow! This really sounds like a model plan for the country!

Well, we were in the middle of it.

Subject Four

That depends, if they are going to drop some kind of chemical warfare, we're not, and I guess we are prepared as we can be. We've been told that we are a safe harbor and that we can't turn people down if they are seeking shelter. We're at war with a sub-culture every day and we need to dedicate our energy on that. We have forty cameras in and around the building. We probably have the most secure building in the State. You cannot get in this building unless you have a photo ID,

even board members need one as well as parents. So yes we have changed policy. A lot of it has to do with the society that we live in. Last we I suspended three kids for threatening a student with knives. We have terrorists from within.

Thank you.

Subject Five

I don't think so. I don't think you can ever be prepared for a tragedy of that magnitude.

Fair enough.

Subject Six

We are as prepared as possible, you can't prepare for everything but there are procedures in place in the event of a catastrophic situation. I think it's important that the staff is alerted to it and that the parents understand their responsibilities.

Ok.

Subject Seven

Yeah I think we are! You never know what the next one is going to be but I think we're prepared. I think everyone came through, the bus drivers, everyone.

Ok

Subject Eight

Like I said, no one is ever prepared for an event of that magnitude. All we can hope for is that people will make the right decisions when the time comes for the good of the kids.

I agree.

Subject Nine

As well as we can be if that means anything. We now know that we have to turn off the ventilation in the event of a chemical attack and we have a short wave radio in the event of a weather emergency or any other tragedy in the event we lose power. We put together a really great book that provides for every contingency.

That's great.

Subject Ten

We're better prepared but I don't think if we're ever really prepared for something of that magnitude because it really matters where it happens. Because right here in this area it was very traumatic but where my daughter lives in Somerset County, the trauma was removed. It wasn't as traumatic as in our district.

Great.

Question Eight

To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

Subject One

Hopefully, any effect it may have upon their academic achievement is positive. Psychologically, I think that would be pretty tuff to measure. I think it definitely had a psychological effect on students and staff and they are very aware of it. Now our kids are the ones who will be growing up with this apprehension and the fear of every time we go to a Code Red or Orange, it has to take its effect on them. Even in this area, traveling through tunnels and bridges is frightening.

Great.

Subject Two

We really have not addressed that specifically and again I think it was addressed on a regular basis and affected everyone's life. I would have to say we really haven't and through out Direct Instruction model we really haven't modified it in any way.

Subject Three

We have in the sense that we celebrate the event in a positive note rather than a tragic note. The first year we had the Commissioner of Education and everything was centered on art and music and as the kids get older I think it will dissipate the same as Pearl Harbor has. And I think if we keep it on a positive note it is better for the kids.

Fine

Subject Four

I really haven't. What I tried to do was put the full focus not on the putting your head under the desks but focusing on moving forward. I really don't think it's had an effect. Our inner city kids are resilient and it bothered some of them for a month or so but they have just moved on. If you live in the projects and believe me 9/11 isn't going to bother you that much. It's had an economic effect and maybe a psychological effect for a few months.

That's fine.

Subject Five

We really haven't considered that. I can't speak for the principal's but I don't think we have really spent a lot of time on that and now that you bring that up we probably should investigate that to some degree.

Ok then.

Subject Six

Actually none. That hasn't been an area that we have addressed.

Really? Ok.

Subject Seven

Other than what I previously mentioned about the Child Study Team working with the students and having the teachers talk about what happened, not really. Hopefully, we were able to resolve their fears but at the same time you have to be prepared if something should occur in the future.

Very good

Subject Eight

I think it was short term. I stayed up the whole night and wrote a letter to the parents and highlighted key items that needed to be addressed by them. Then another letter went out about anthrax several weeks later. But that was very much procedural. The 9/11 letter was brief but very informative as to what parents need to do. What was different is that very young children interpreted the event in a very different manner. Even my own son was obsessed about it and wanted to know who was the strongest nation.

The 9/11 letter talks about professional help that we had in our school, information on the web site, and the issue of bias. We did not want any specific culture taking blame for this.

Excellent.

Subject Nine

That doesn't really apply to our students.

OK

Subject Ten

I don't really think with the exception of someone who had lost a family member, that our kids experienced any significant prolonged trauma. Now a days kids accept these things particularly because there is a war going on and they see it on the news. I think there is a sort of acceptance and I don't like that but I think it's the reality.

That's fine.

Question Nine

Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

Subject One

Again I think we touched upon that in a previous question.

Yes, that true you have.

Subject Two

I don't think we were prepared for it but we did deal with it well. We did have an early dismissal and it was very chaotic. We had parents coming in frantically to pick up their children. We did have a procedure in place to account for all of our 491 children and their safe dismissal. Since then we have new software that gives us multiple alternate pick-up people for kids like aunts and uncles. Since September 11th, the biggest problem was that we had some kids whose parents who worked in New York and we had people who were friends and said that they would take a particular child home. That was an area of concern for us.

Ok

Subject Three

Well we thought we were prepared and we did react the way we should have reacted but we were making those decisions as we had to whereas now those

decisions are already planned out ahead of time. If one of us now is not in the school at the time the next person in charge will know exactly what to do.

Fine

Subject Four

Absolutely not. I made it up as I went along. What we decided to do was cord off the school and allows only the parents to come in for their children with the proper identification to pick up their children. We had a staff member escort the student down to the Main Office and they were dismissed from there. I went around personally and explained what was going on to each class. If you have to hear something this traumatic you should hear it from your principal. At 2:45 I let all the teachers go and at 6:00 I let the administrator leave and I waited until 9:00 pm for the last parent.

I know what you mean.

Subject Five

No, not in any way. I just thank God that the students going on the field trip were delayed and didn't leave for the city. That would have been horrible.

I agree.

Subject Six

To the extent that we had to prepare things on a dime, yes. Now in the event of a terrorist attack we practice drills and if it was to happen again we are better prepared because we know what we need to do now to a certain extent.

Very good.

Subject Seven

No, I can't say that we were but as I said we had a tremendous amount of cooperation from our entire staff and police and fire community.

That's great.

Subject Eight

No, absolutely not.

Next question.

Subject Nine

As well as we could have been I suppose but when you develop those plans you realize how little control you really do have even if you are somewhat prepared. It's like having a fire drill; you're hoping that it never happens and that you'll be able to get out but you practice that fire drill anyway.

Great.

Subject Ten

No, I don't. But I do believe that we really managed very, very well under the circumstances.

That's great.

Question Ten

As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

Subject One

I think the community as a whole worked very well together and the fact that we are so small certainly helped us logistically keeps things under control as best we could. But I do believe many people will be feeling the effects for a long time.

Very good.

Subject Two

Yeah, again it's getting all the emergency procedures in place and utilizing the counseling that we offer.

Great!

Subject Three

We've stepped up security quite a bit.

Ok

Subject Four

I've mentioned several things already but I would have to say that we were honest with them and reacted in a calm and caring manner. It's as simple as that.

Excellent.

Subject Five

Other than create this crisis plan which says who does what and when we really haven't. I mean we were working on a crisis plan because of things like Columbine. In reality we were addressing issues that were internal and not external.

That's true

Subject Six

Well, we've revised our Emergency Management Plans, included in them are action plans for contacting the police, fire department, Red Cross, Crisis counselors etc. And this plan covers multiple crisis situations, for example, an explosion in the building, what would you do.

Very good

Subject Seven

Again as I mentioned the entire school community really pulled it all together as best they could to help out and keep the kids calm.

Ok

Subject Eight

Again, what we've said thus far regarding recognizing that they were seriously affected by this event and providing counseling for them even up until now.

Very good.

Subject Nine

Aside from providing the staff with immediate support from our Child Study team and the re-development of our Emergency Management Plan, I would say nothing more.

Fine

Subject Ten

I'd say we have covered that pretty much and I wouldn't want to repeat it all again, unless you need me to.

No, that's fine we have covered it.

Question Eleven

To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

Subject One

As an instructional leader I think we have to prepare our students for what's happening globally. In a sense I mean going back to the dark ages when I was in school, very little that I remember was taught about the Middle East and we really overlooked that whole area, what they were and what they stood for. We studied Europe and Asia, but now the students really need to know about the entire spectrum of cultures and religions. This is something we have put into our curriculum now and it has changed the way geography and social studies are taught today.

Ok! Excellent.

Subject Two

I think it has had a lasting effect and again I think it has to do with how vulnerable we are as a community not only because of our proximity but I think everyone in the country felt they were vulnerable and the world has now changed and its not as secure as it once was.

Very Good.

Subject Three

We have a better relationship with the police department, we have police in our schools and its more positive environment for the kids and they see that the police are there to protect them. Our city was taken over by the U.S. Army right after 9/11 because it became the main evacuation site with all the access points to N.Y. You couldn't move around the city unless you were moving with the police department. Also, as the largest group of people in the city they had to decide what they were going to do with the schools. But they never considered us in all of this prior to 9/11.

Excellent

Subject Four

Well, again, I think initially we were all in shock but everyone really pulled together throughout the entire ordeal and it was very uplifting to see that. And again, given what these kids live through on a daily basis I think they are somewhat hardened.

Ok

Subject Five

I think like most schools, it really took weeks for the anxiety and emotional trauma to subside.

You're right about that.

Subject Six

I think we've touched upon that as I said initially yes it was traumatic for those who had family involved in some way but the community really pulled together. It was incredible the support that we received.

I believe it.

Subject Seven

Well, there were people that passed away in the town, not only parents. The town did a nice thing and erected a monument of the deceased by the library. They had a lovely memorial service and our children participated and sang. All the relatives were invited and they saw the concern of the community for them. They did a real nice job in our town.

Great.

Subject Eight

We've pretty much covered that in some much as we are a very small town and being so close to New York I don't think there was one person in this town that wasn't affected by it.

I believe that.

Subject Nine

Well, I think that the school community was traumatized as we all were. There was really no escaping the effects.

You're right.

Subject Ten

Well, again, as I had said previously it was a nightmare but somehow we managed to pull it together working as a team.

Fine.

Question Twelve

How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

Subject One

As an instructional leader I think we have to prepare our students for what's happening globally. In a sense I mean going back to the dark ages when I was in school, very little that I remember was taught about the Middle East and we really overlooked that whole area, what they were and what they stood for. We studied Europe and Asia, but now the students really need to know about the entire spectrum of cultures and religions. This is something we have put into our curriculum now and it has changed the way geography and social studies are taught today.

Ok! Excellent.

Subject Two

Yes, and it's really a matter of just being prepared and asking a lot of questions. Everyone that comes into the building you have to be concerned about unless you know them and our building is a brand new facility and it was built for us but the town community uses it after 4pm and at that point we have numerous people using the building. It's really a very difficult job at that point to monitor the building.

I don't like that at all.

Subject Three

The district continued on as far as instruction was concerned. They just added to the supplemental programs as far as training people how to react to disasters. What we have is an emergency box in every principal's office. It's like a tub. It's has flash lights, caution tape, medical supplies, everything the Red Cross would use in an emergency. It has a megaphone because in some schools we lost the P.A. system and we had to communicate to the staff.

Ok

Subject Four

Initially I think it really impacted on instruction for the first few weeks but with the increased counseling and support from parents, I think the kids have recovered quite well.

Ok then.

Subject Five

No, but if I thought what should be done we would of dedicated more time to diversity and differences and why people act the way they do so they could understand each other a little better.

Sounds great.

Subject Six

I don't think it has impacted on instruction but it has just made people more aware of these horrible events that could happen and now we are more prepared for it. I don't think instruction has changed much.

Ok.

Subject Seven

No, not really. What we tried to do was keep things as normal as we could. The adults and administrators were planning for anything that was to come but we tried to keep the kids calm.

Ok

Subject Eight

I think initially it was a negative impact on instruction and suggested that teachers move off this issue and move on and that it was temporary. I think after a few days the kids were back on track.

The other issue is that we wrongly assumed that the adults were OK, and they weren't OK. When I think about it I don't think I had the ability to deal with all the adult issues. Like I said, I myself had to really struggle to gain my composure because I really thought that this might be the end.

If had had to reflect on what we did I would have to say that we didn't do enough for the staff and that would have been one of the corrective strategies when I think about next time. I guess I just assumed that adults would be OK and I don't know if we had the where with all to it.

Interesting.

Subject Nine

The level of instruction is pretty basic and nothing has really changed too much. I would say that September 11th did not drive any changes in that sense.

Ok, very well.

Subject Ten

Sure I think initially everyone was shook up and instruction was affected for a while. I mean how could anyone come and violate the United States of America. I mean we're always watching it on television and now it was happening right here in our home. But I think people started to realize we were vulnerable. But I think the kids and adults got through it and were able to move on after a week or so.

Ok

Question Thirteen

Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Subject One

Aside from the increased awareness and teacher workshops not really. As an urban school we have always emphasized security and have a School Resource Officer at the high school and tight procedures for entering the elementary schools.

Great.

Subject Two

Yes, many detailed plans including our evacuation and security plans and our emergency plan, which is quite extensive.

Good!

Subject Three

I think we've discussed them already.

I agree.

Subject Four

Initially I think it really impacted on instruction for the first few weeks but with the increased counseling and support from parents, I think the kids have recovered quite well.

Ok then.

Subject Five

No, but if I thought what should be done we would of dedicated more time to diversity and differences and why people act the way they do so they could understand each other a little better.

Sounds great.

Subject Six

I don't think it has impacted on instruction but it has just made people more aware of these horrible events that could happen and now we are more prepared for it. I don't think instruction has changed much.

Ok.

Subject Seven

I don't think it has impacted on instruction but it has just made people more aware of these horrible events that could happen and now we are more prepared for it. I don't think instruction has changed much.

Ok.

Subject Eight

No, not really. What we tried to do was keep things as normal as we could. The adults and administrators were planning for anything that was to come but we tried to keep the kids calm.

Ok

Subject Nine

Aside from what we spoke of already I had to upgrade the Public Address System. There were some dead spots in the building, which could really create a problem in an emergency. The 9/11 events really helped me in that area because the district really did not want to put the money out for that.

I thought that was one thing that was really important and now we have fire drills where we block off a section of the building to see how the students will react. I put up a sign that says this exit is blocked. That's the sort of thing we do.

Great.

Subject Ten

Yes, yes, yes. We've always had cameras at the doors. Now things have changed. Of course parents have access but once the school is cleared it is really locked down and secure. The areas that were not secure were really tightened up. We've put numbers on every single door in every school in the district so in the event there is an emergency or an intruder the police can locate the area immediately.

Wow, that's a great idea.

The police and fire department have detailed maps of every school so now we can say, for example, there's an intruder at door #28. Also, in order to get in or out of our high school you have to swipe your ID badge. We are 24-7 with swipe in and out.

I like that idea.

In the elementary schools we have a sign in procedure and everyone needs a pass to walk around. We have cops in the school program and we usually have an officer in every school. In the high school we have six police officers.

How many students are in your high school?

2400

I gave the captain of the police department a key to every building so in the event of a crisis they have immediate access. They have the floor plans of every school. In the event of an emergency, I take the entire school roster with me. Now in the event of a school evacuation we walk the students away from the building. We do lockdown drills in every school once a month and every classroom has shades that roll down. Every teacher knows what to do. The halls are clear every day and we maintain strict discipline.

We had several bomb scares in the past and the last one was in March during the HSPA. It was horrible. It was cold and rainy and no one had their coats and we had to move them to two other schools. We also have a plan with the Catholic Schools where we could use their church and schools.

We actually caught the two kids who initiated the bomb scare and the first time in our school history we expelled the two students.

That's incredible.

Question Fourteen

What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

Subject One

I think we've touched upon all areas and I think we have tried to be proactive rather than reactive. When I think back to Columbine it really changed the way schools are run all over the country. That whole idea of how we have to protect our students and in my mind we have to address these tragedies and how we must address them. And as I said its on-going, every year we plan to have these workshops with faculty and they bring it back to the students. Very Good! Thank you very much.

Subject Two

Again, as I have mentioned before with the plans now in effect.

Ok, last question.

Subject Three

Again, we have talked in detail in this area.

Fine

Subject Four

We have upgraded our overall emergency policies but you are never really sure how you will react in a real emergency, lets face it.

You're right.

Subject Five

First, we created a crisis plan and other than that I can't think of anything else. Of course, we review the safety plans and practice them often.

Ok

Subject Six

As I've just mentioned we've definitely taken more precautions since September 11th and the onset of the war in Iraq.

Ok, last question.

Subject Seven

Other than what we have talked about nothing more at this time.

That's fine

Subject Eight

As I've said, the upgrading of the EMP hopefully will better prepare us to deal with a tragedy in the future.

And the last question.

Subject Nine

Well, yeah, we had several meeting and we decided we had to come up with a plan. The school psychologist and the School Social Worker provided the staff with support and additional resources if they needed them. But I would say that no one really seemed to use his or her assistance. But the faculty supported each other.

That's great.

Subject Ten

I'd say I've covered that pretty much. Wouldn't you say?

Yes, absolutely.

Question Fifteen

Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

Subject One

I think we've touched upon all areas and I think we have tried to be proactive rather than reactive. When I think back to Columbine it really changed the way schools are run all over the country. That whole idea of how we have to protect our students and in my mind we have to address these tragedies and how we must address them. And as I said its on-going, every year we plan to have these workshops with faculty and they bring it back to the students.

Very Good! Thank you very much.

Subject Two

No, I think we have covered it all.

Thank you for your time!

Subject Three

No, I don't think so.

Thank you very much.

Subject Four

No not really.

Thank you for your time.

Subject Five

No, none that I can think of.

Thank you very much for your time.

Subject Six

No, I think it goes back to a question you asked earlier and since 9/11 it seems to me that the schools that were farther away really weren't affected as much as we were.

Thank you.

Subject Seven

No, not really.

No, not really.

Thank you.

Subject Eight

Thank you for your time. I really enjoyed speaking with you and for providing me some very interesting insights.

You're welcome.

Subject Nine

No. Not really. I think I told you everything and of course every September 11th we recognize the victims and their families in some way.

Thank you very much for your time.

Subject Ten

No, not really. Thank you very much.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of the research for this dissertation was to explore the perceptions of Superintendents concerning the impact of disaster and tragedy upon the role of their school organization. Specifically, the study sought to unearth data in the form of common themes, feelings, and patterns through individual qualitative interviews to determine the extent of the impact of the September 11th disaster upon their school districts in Hudson County New Jersey as well as their resiliency to adapt to the on-going threat of tragedy. Throughout this study, finding within the literature review as well as analysis of the data derived from intensive qualitative interviews, suggest multiple issues emerging that will need to be considered for further investigation and will be discussed later in this chapter within that specific framework.

In Chapter I of this study, the researcher presented an introduction, statement of the problem, rationale, definition of terms, research questions, purpose, limitations, and the importance of the study.

Within Chapter II, the researcher presented literature discussing the impact of the September 11th disaster upon the school community, the impact of media exposure, and the struggles that school districts experienced in the aftermath of 9/11. In addition, the

response of the school organization, the impact of terrorism on school curriculum, and the psychological impact of disaster and tragedy upon students were investigated.

In Chapter III, research methodology, research design, instrument design, setting, background information of subjects, data collection, and data analysis were presented. The research findings were presented in Chapter IV in the format of qualitative data analysis through direct quotes from the subjects. Chapter V will present a summary, conclusion, and implications of the study as well as recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

Members of the school organization are called upon to take responsibility for dealing with multiple problems and issues each and every day, now they are faced with the overwhelming challenge of dealing with the ever present threat of terrorism, disaster, and the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy.

The current literature review examined in this study suggests that the tragedy of September 11th has significantly impacted upon the school organization and its ability to provide for the needs of their students. School districts are now being called upon to seriously address their role in dealing with future disasters and the impact it may have upon their organization. In addition, they are now required to maintain updated emergency management plans, crisis intervention programs, and provide curriculum that encompasses the teaching of world religions and global concerns.

The importance of this study was to explore the perceptions of superintendents concerning the impact of disaster and tragedy upon the role of the school organization. It is intended that the analysis of their perceptions will further assist them in understanding

the nature of the impact of disaster upon their school organization as well as guiding them toward a course of action. In addition, given the recent September 11th tragedy and the on-going threat of terrorism, the school organization must seriously re-evaluate their role and responsibility in dealing with the impact of future disasters.

Findings of the Research

Research Question #1 asked to what extent has disaster and tragedy impacted upon the role of the school organization. Responses from the majority of superintendents concerning the impact of tragedy and disaster upon their school district were consistently reported as causing them to look more closely at the overall picture of what's going on in their schools concerning security and preparing for a disaster. Other respondents clearly articulated that it really made them take a deeper look at their plans for any future disaster or evacuation as well as raising their level of awareness of the importance of security and safety for the students. As a result of this heightened awareness that was expressed, the majority of respondents now have several plans in place and practice them often. There was also consistency in the responses that supported the notion that you can never really prepare for such a tragedy, but it certainly has brought an awareness that schools need to be better prepared. These findings are consistent with the research of Lavarello (2003) who reports that in this post 9/11 environment there are definite signs that schools must be on the anti-terrorism radar screen. In a recent report, four terrorists caught in Oregon said that schools, churches and synagogues were on their hit list. In getting to the heart of America, it appears that terrorists could be targeting schools. Yet most school principals know very little about who is coming into their building. While Columbine and similar tragedies have led many schools to draw up plans to handle shootings, terrorism is

very different from a shooting. Feinberg (2002) concurs with these research findings in that he believes that the challenge for principals is to increase their schools' ability to ensure the welfare of students and staff in times of crisis. Furthermore, planning and training not only improve school safety, they can also help minimize anxiety and increase the resiliency of caregivers in the event of a crisis. Effective programs involve all school personnel, incorporate ongoing prevention and intervention strategies with critical response training, coordinate with community services, and provide post-event and caregiver support.

One of the most significant findings suggest that despite the fact that most schools had some sort of plan in place, they were really a shortfall because they didn't have a second place to evacuate, meaning that a school on the waterfront would evacuate to another school and that doesn't work since the other school could be only four or five blocks away. In most of the responses, the finding were consistent in that the greatest problem they face is that if they have to evacuate the entire district they have no place to go.

The research finding were further explored within question #1 in regard to the level of preparedness for such a tragedy by the school organization and it was found that the majority of subjects responded that they were not prepared for such a crisis as this and responded to the best of their ability as the crisis developed. These research findings were consistent with Delesiso (2000) who states, "the vast majority of schools have not taken into account in their crisis planning all of the issues related to terrorism." "Some issues, such as handling bombs and bomb threats, creating emergency communications plans, and preparing for gunfire on campus should already have been in the plans." "New

issues—such as mail handling procedures in the event of an anthrax scare or a suspicious package, preparedness for chemical and biological attacks or food contamination, stocking adequate levels of food for extended needs, and a host of others—simply have not been considered.”

The issue of proximity to the September 11th tragedy surfaced in several responses as many of the students and staff in this investigation witnessed the impact of the airplane collision into both towers as well as their eventual collapse. In fact, some schools were utilized as a holding spot for the flux of injured people that came in from New York City that were in the Liberty Science Center area as well as an evacuation and triage center for the victims and survivors who came across the river. Bowman (2002) states that children who witnessed any aspect of the terrorist attack, either directly or via the media, showed evidence of behavioral or psychological reactions to the events of 9/11.

The issue of media exposure and its impact on children will be discussed later and deserves further investigation as it repeatedly surfaced within the literature review. Furthermore, these research findings are consistent with the a survey conducted by Hoff (2002) of more than 8,000 New York City children and their symptoms related to the events of Sept. 11. About 8 percent of the 4th through 12th graders surveyed were deemed to have suffered “major depression,” 10 percent showed signs of “generalized anxiety,” and 15 percent had agoraphobia—the fear of being in public places. More than 10 percent reported several symptoms consistent with post-traumatic stress disorder. The numbers were higher for youngsters who attended schools near the site of the World Trade Center. At least a third of the children with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder were not

receiving mental-health services, according to the survey, which was conducted for the New York City Board of Education.

In Research Question #2 participants were asked to what extent has the recent 9/11 tragedy impacted upon the members of the school community. The responses were consistently reported in a similar manner as the students being severely traumatized to having a minimal effect upon them. The level of trauma was reported as being more severe for those students who lost family members and for those who because of proximity witnessed the event unfold. However, the level of trauma as perceived by the respondents was inconsistent and perhaps unreliable, as no formal psychological screening was performed at any of the school districts. The issue of proximity and the fact that the majority of children actually witnessed the event unfold was consistently reported within the framework of this research question as having a profound and traumatic impact on students.

Bowman (2001) reports that it was clear that many children who witnessed any aspect of the terrorist attack, either directly or via the media, showed evidence of behavioral or psychological reactions to the events of 9/11 and the subsequent scare involving dissemination of anthrax spores through the mail.

Significant reactions among children were not limited by geographic proximity and persisted for years after the event. A probable factor was media exposure. Media coverage was even more intense after the Trade Center and Pentagon attacks than in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing, with 24-hour cable news services covering the September 11 incidents incessantly (Redlener, 2002).

The research findings gathered from participant subjects support relevant research suggesting that children who have witnessed tragedy in their families, schools, or communities are also vulnerable to serious long-term problems. Their emotional reactions, including fear, depression, withdrawal or anger, can occur immediately or some time after the tragic event. Youngsters who have experienced a catastrophic event often need support from parents and teachers to avoid long-term emotional harm. Most will recover in a short time, but those who develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other persistent problems need treatment (National Institute of Mental Health, 2003).

In addition to trauma, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder relevant findings from research suggest that children depression has emerged as another variable that will need to be further investigated within another study.

In a recent survey of teachers in American international schools, the vast majority of teachers believed that children were adversely affected by fears and that as many as 50% were not functioning effectively at some time because of fear-related concerns. Children can be adversely affected by disasters and terrors. A traumatic event in a child's life can lead to fear-related problems that interfere with the child's normal functioning. A child who otherwise is functioning on a high level with regard to the concepts of control, self-worth, and security may develop reactions to specific fear objects in this way.

Relevant research findings are synonymous with the findings of Hoff (2002) regarding the psychological trauma on children. He states that the differing responses and the ways students may mask them put teachers, principals, and school psychologists on the front lines to ensure that students are screened for psychological disorders, that they

receive professional help if needed, and that they begin to heal from events that otherwise could leave lifelong scars.

Although research findings within this study indicate that most schools responded with ongoing counseling, consultants, art therapists, and Child Study Team members as the primary resource utilized to address these concerns, according to Hoff (2001), that was an inadequate response. He states that the city schools did not provide one service that psychologists generally believe all schools should supply in the aftermath of a traumatic event, that being, psychological screening. “When we don’t screen, we may miss kids,” said Robin H. Gurwitch, an associate professor in the department of pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City. “As adults, we are not good at being able to identify all children in need” (Hoff, 2001).

Interestingly, within the framework of Research Question #2, a portion of the participants reported that they felt that the faculty suffered more psychological trauma than the children. Although this aspect was not the focus of the research it has emerged as significant within the framework of this study and will warrant further investigation. Clearly, as reported by the National Institute of Mental Health, (2001) in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., both adults and children are struggling with the emotional impact of such large-scale damage and losses of life.

Finally, research finding from the participants when asked directly as to the extent that the September 11th tragedy has had upon their school community suggest that there was no escaping the trauma, particularly within the first few days and that they continue to feel extremely vulnerable due to their proximity. The issue of “vulnerability” has

surfaced within several frameworks and appears to be a recurring theme throughout this research.

Research has shown that both adults and children who experience catastrophic events show a wide range of reactions. Some suffer only worries and bad memories that fade with emotional support and the passage of time. Others are more deeply affected and experience long-term problems. Research on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) shows that some soldiers, survivors of criminal victimization, violence, and survivors of natural and man-made catastrophes suffer long-term effects from their experiences (National Institute of Mental Health, 2003).

Research Question #3 asked to what extent has the role of the school organization adapted to the increased threat of terrorism as well as the risk of disaster in order to meet the needs of the students within their school community?

Within the framework of Research Question #3, the issue of changes in the curriculum was investigated and produced inconsistent findings from participants of this study. The responses varied as to no adaptation of curriculum in order to address heightened concerns regarding current religious and global issues to one subject reporting that there was a Genesis Bible Study group meeting during lunch in one particular school.

Within the context of curriculum and classroom discussions, Smith, (2002) believes that issues of right and wrong become magnified in times like these. You can be sure that 7-year olds and 17-year olds will be confused and conflicted by the events and implications of Sept. 11. As we have seen, some of these youngsters will be tormented by nightmares and many will stubbornly pose impossible questions. Their quest cannot be ignored. Avenues need to be created so students can ask why and consider complicated

explanations. Some of our teaching, inevitably, must center on asking value-laden questions. The ethical dilemmas that fictional characters face in literature, the complex decisions made by historic figures, the moral decisions that have confounded scientists—all of these need to be debriefed, dissected, and discussed.

Research findings within this study and relevant research suggest that curriculum integration of global and religious themes is an area in which schools will need to investigate and further consider as the Middle East crisis and terrorism continue to escalate and impact upon our daily lives.

One of the most consistent findings within the framework of Research Question #3 concerned the creation of new policy as a result of the September 11th tragedy. The overwhelming number of participants reported that new policy had been created and that the existing plan was inadequate to address such a crisis as September 11th.

Consistent with the findings of Delisio (2003) as well as the research within this study, the vast majority of schools have not taken into account in their crisis planning all of the issues related to terrorism,” said Kenneth A. Trump, president of National School Safety and Security Services of Cleveland, Ohio, a consulting firm.

“Some issues, such as handling bombs and bomb threats, creating emergency communications plans, and preparing for gunfire on campus should already have been in the plans. New issues—such as mail handling procedures in the event of an anthrax scare or a suspicious package, preparedness for chemical and biological attacks or food contamination, stocking adequate levels of food for extended needs, and a host of others—simply have not been considered.”

Surprisingly, Delesio, (2003) reports that schools were not initially included in the nation's homeland security plans. The federal government has appropriately passed anti-terrorism and homeland security legislation to protect airlines, bridges, and other national critical infrastructure components, yet our K-12 schools were not included anywhere in those laws. We have a federal education policy of No Child Left Behind, but all schools have been left behind by Congress in terms of homeland security preparedness.

According to Delisio (2003) the No Child Left Behind Act indicates schools need to develop crisis plans beyond what they traditionally have done and need to look at some of the new incidents that could take place. The Department of Education has taken a leadership role in this endeavor and schools have been told that if they don't have a crisis plan, they need to get one; if they have one, they need to update it. Many of these plans have not been reviewed since they were adopted, which were after some of the school shootings at Columbine High School. Schools also need to review their plans with local emergency responders.

Another reason is that some administrators may think that crisis plans adopted after school shootings several years ago are all they need. After those shooting incidents, many schools responded by creating general disaster kits that included maps, keys, student lists, flashlights, phone books, and duct tape, and establishing a simple evacuation plan or lockdown plan. But one crisis management plan does not fit all catastrophes, according to Lavarello (2003). "Responding to a school crisis—like a shooting or a fight—is much different than responding to a terrorist attack" (Delisio, 2003).

Clearly, relevant research supports and calls for the development and expansion of emergency management plans as specified in No Child Left Behind and results of this

study suggest that schools that were investigated have upgraded their plans considerable. However, state and federal school agencies will need to monitor and provide clear guidelines for all schools regardless of proximity.

Overall, within the context of Research Question #3, relevant research findings along with the responses of the subjects within this study indicate that modification and upgrading of emergency management plans was the primary adaptation to the increased threat of terrorism and disaster in order to meet the needs of the students within their school community. From the perspective of this researcher that appears to be a significant shortfall based upon the current literature review and research findings.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Superintendents concerning the impact of disaster and tragedy upon the role of their school organization. These perceptions as told through individual qualitative interviews revealed information that suggests a significant number of students and staff were seriously traumatized by the September 11th tragedy. As no formal psychological screening for students or staff was performed after the trauma in any school district, specific data is unavailable and the comments presented by the subjects is based primarily on their observations.

Given the extent of the tragedy, most superintendents responded professionally and acted in the best interest of their students and staff. There were significant inconsistencies in responding to the disaster based on the individual circumstance and proximity of each district.

Although the majority of subjects responded that emergency management plans have since been updated and expanded as a result of 9/11, much more will need to be

done to address the psychological and learning needs of students and staff. Koplewicz (2004) is currently launching an outreach campaign sponsored by the Bear Stearns Foundation aimed at raising awareness of the potential emotional impact of 9/11 and its aftermath on children. It appears that the escalating threat of terrorism since 9/11 may be taking an emotional toll on a segment of the student population and may quite simply be adding additional stress to their already stressful lives.

Overall, given the analysis of research findings from this study, although limited in size and scope, as well as relevant literature, it appears that the primary response of the school organization as a result of the recent 9/11 disaster was to initiate immediate crisis intervention and to upgrade their emergency management plans. Although this response suggests an appropriate course of action on the part of the school district, this researcher is suggesting that the school organization has a responsibility to allocate more time, funding, teacher training, curriculum modification, and on-going psychological screening and intervention in order to meet the needs of their school community.

Implications

The research concerning the perceptions of superintendents regarding the impact of disaster and tragedy upon their school organization suggests that most districts were not prepared to handle such a traumatic event and responded as best they could under the circumstances. Most, if not all districts within this study responded with immediate crisis intervention for their students using their in-house Child Study Teams. It should be noted that this type of immediate crisis intervention for trauma is specific in nature and requires specialized training, which more than likely, no one had.

The follow-up was to initiate a modified and in most cases an elaborate emergency management plan which in some cases was funded by huge monetary grants over the course of many years.

Based on the research findings of this study as well as relevant research contained in recent literature, the implications of this study suggest that schools will need to expand their response to include a multi-faceted approach to addressing the social and emotional needs of their students and staff re-allocating much of the current funding that is now being spent in other areas.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and conclusions of this research, recommendations for further research are suggested in the following areas:

1. Follow-up study implementing psychological screening for students exhibiting symptoms such as anxiety, unusual fears, depression, irritability, and numbness (lack of feeling) in an effort to identify students who may be experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the September 11th disaster.
2. An investigation into the relevance of a school's proximity to a disaster or tragedy and the specific implications and responses that it may suggest in dealing with the effects upon that school and its community members.
3. A research study pertaining to the issue of media exposure and its impact upon children during a disaster or tragedy. In addition, an exploration of relevant research into the effects of television violence upon children and the impact of such exposure throughout the course of their lives, as well as the subsequent effects on their behavior later in their life.

4. An exploration of the impact of tragedy and disaster upon academic achievement in students and the concurrent effects of trauma and depression upon their overall success in school.

5. An in-depth investigation into the effects of stress and anxiety experienced by students as a result of the recent 9/11 tragedy and the on-going threat of terrorism now present within the United States.

Concluding Remarks

The world as we know it changed dramatically on September 11th, 2001. Since that crisp, clear day, when terrorists hijacked four commercial jetliners and killed thousands of innocent people, national and international politics have not been the same. Those dreadful events taught us about the cruelty of modern terrorism and forced us as educators to revise many of our assumptions about leadership, teaching, and global issues (Ravitch, 2002).

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Superintendents regarding the impact of disaster and tragedy the role of their school district. Throughout the course of the interview sessions with them, the panic, horror, and trauma that many of the subjects, students, and staff experienced due to their proximity of the disaster became overwhelming. Clearly, all citizens of the United States felt the initial psychological impact and shock and as the ever-present threat of terrorism continues to loom, it creates serious concerns for superintendents to deal with now and in the future.

According to Fienberg, (2002) the traumatic effects of September 11th will eventually subside, the educators' expanded role as crisis caregivers however, is unlikely to recede. Whether the crisis is a terrorist attack, school shooting, suicide, or natural

disaster, schools will be expected to provide an effective response and appropriate caregiving services. The challenge for school districts is to increase their schools' ability to ensure the welfare of students and staff in times of crisis. Planning and training not only improve school safety, they can also help minimize anxiety and increase the resiliency of caregivers in the event of a crisis. Effective programs involve all school personnel, incorporate ongoing prevention and intervention strategies with critical response training, coordinate with community services, and provide post-event and caregiver support.

This is the challenge that school districts must now attend to, as it is clear upon the completion of this study that the threat of terrorism, tragedy, and disaster continues to permeate our lives and will continue to dramatically impact upon our school communities.

Although the primary focus of this dissertation is rooted in the need to determine the perceptions of superintendents and their role in addressing these issues within their school organization, it seems well apparent, if not urgent, given this brief review of the literature, that the implications of this study are far reaching. It is this researcher's contention that many administrators may not be aware of the extent of this issue in regard to the long term psychological impact 9/11 has had upon their students and the secondary effects on academic achievement. It is feasible given this increased awareness that administrators, teachers, school psychologists, and board members will need to initiate new policy to address these concerns. In addition, given the extent of emotional trauma that may still be present in students as a result of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the impact it may be having upon their academic achievement, *time* is a

critical factor. This inquiry is justified in that administrators need to be made aware that post traumatic stress disorder does exist in children and that there is a considerable body of literature and research available linking learning problems to this condition.

Furthermore, awareness of this issue is not enough and administrators must follow up with psychological intervention in order to provide support for those students who may be exhibiting symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety.

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APPENDICES

Question Route

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?
2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?
3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?
4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?
5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?
6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?
7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?
8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?
9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?
10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?
11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?
12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?
13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?
14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?
15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?



Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams

Completion Certificate

This is to certify that

ANTHONY INGENITO

has completed the **Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams** online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on 12/16/2003.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research.
 - ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants.
 - the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process.
 - a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research.
 - a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent.
 - a description of the role of the IRB in the research process.
 - the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants.
-

National Institutes of Health
<http://www.nih.gov>

Superintendent

Anthony G. Ingenito
1500 Route 57
Washington, New Jersey 07882

Dear Dr.

I am currently engaged in a doctoral study at Seton Hall University as I work toward my degree in Educational Administration and Supervision within the Department of Educational Leadership.

I am conducting research within Hudson County in the State of New Jersey for the purpose of interviewing ten Superintendents in order to investigate his/her perceptions concerning the impact of tragedy and disaster upon the role of the school organization. The expected duration of the subject's participation will be limited to a single half-hour session consisting of a telephonic interview conducted by this researcher.

The procedures to be followed will commence upon your written acknowledgement at which time I will contact you in order to discuss the process and to arrange a time and date for the interview. The procedure for the interview will take place calling from my home and will consist of a single half-hour interview session. I will have prepared fifteen questions for the interview and will ask the same questions to you and nine other Superintendent's within the selected subject group in order to complete the study. I will record, transcribe, and take notes of our interview only upon your written consent.

The questions that I will ask of you will be open ended and will pertain to your attitude, perceptions, and opinions concerning the impact of disaster and tragedy upon the role of your school organization.

I assure you that participation in this qualitative study is strictly voluntary and that you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Furthermore, I will assure you that the information that you share will be held strictly confidential and will only be used for purposes of this study.

In addition, the transcriptions and tapes will be safely stored, locked, and destroyed upon completion of the research and no participant/district at any time will be labeled by name and will be simply designated as participants 1 through 10.

Most importantly, in regard to this matter, I as the principal researcher will be the only person to have access to the data collected.

I am confident that the interview process will be an engaging and productive exchange for you and that given the confidential arrangements previously mentioned it poses absolutely no risk to you or your school district.

In fact, I expect that the process of reflecting upon this issue and the impact it has had upon the role of your school organization will be extremely beneficial to you.

If for any reason you may need to contact the researcher, you may reach,

Mr. Anthony G. Ingenito @
Warren County Technical School
1500 Route 57
Washington, New Jersey 07882
908-835-2823 (school)
ingenitoa@warrennet.org

In regard to the audio taping of the interview, I ask your permission to record our conversation and wish to make you aware that you have the right to review all or any portion of the tape and that you have the right to request that it will be destroyed. However, all audiotape and transcriptions will be destroyed upon completion of this study.

Finally, please be advised that I will return to you a signed and dated copy of this informed consent letter within 72 hours of my receiving it.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached at (973) 275-2977 or 313-6314. I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Note: For anonymity's sake, consent to participate is indicated by returning the enclosed letter to the researcher."

Sincerely,

Anthony G. Ingenito



February 6, 2004

Anthony Ingenito
78 Hillside Road Chester
New Jersey 07930

Dear Mr Ingenito:

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved as submitted your research proposal entitled "A Qualitative Study Exploring the Perceptions of Superintendents Concerning the Impact of Tragedy and Disaster Upon the Role of the School Organization". Enclosed for your records are the signed Request for Approval form and the stamped original Consent Forms. Make copies only of this stamped Consent Forms.

The Institutional Review Board approval of your research is valid for a one-year period from the date of this letter. During this time, any changes to the research protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

According to federal regulations, continuing review of already approved research is mandated to take place at least 12 months after this initial approval. You will receive communication from the IRB Office for this several months before the anniversary date of your initial approval.

Your protocol has been reviewed and approved under expedited review. The IRB reserves the right at any time to request full review of the study.

Thank you for you cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. Giuliana Mazzoni".

P Giuliana Mazzoni, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Director, Institutional Review Board

C.c.: Anthony Colicella, Ph.D.

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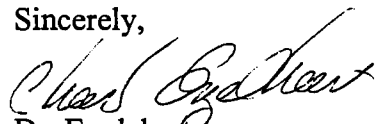
Dr. C. Englehart
School Psychologist
Warren County Technical School
1500 Route 57
Washington, New Jersey
February 20, 2004

Dear Mr. Ingenito,

As per your request regarding my participation in the **Jury of Experts Validation** for your dissertation interview questions, please be advised that I have reviewed your research and the questions proposed for the interviews. Given the information contained within your proposal I confirm that the interview questions are valid and relevant within the framework of your study.

May this letter serve as part of the requirements for validation of your interview questions that I have reviewed and if I can be of any assistance please let me know.

Sincerely,



Dr. Englehart

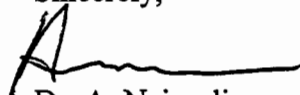
Dr. A. Naimoli
Principal
Warren County Technical School
1500 Route 57
Washington, New Jersey
February 20, 2004

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Dr. A. Naimoli

Albert Gilson
Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Warren County Technical School
1500 Route 57
Washington, New Jersey
February 20, 2004

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Gilson', followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that extends to the right.

Mr. A. Gilson

Interview Transcriptions

Subject 1

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

Well, I think it has caused us to look at the overall picture of what's going on in the schools concerning security, getting each school prepared for a disaster, because our town is one of the towns near the waterfront. Actually from the third floor of our building you were able to watch the entire tragedy unfold. We only had one student who lost a parent but we had quite a few policemen from our town that went over to New York and were injured. It really made us take a deeper look at what are our plans for any future disaster or evacuation. We've had lock down drills for the children over the past three years but this has really given us a sense of reality.

Very good, next question.

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

Well, I think the students themselves accepted it much better in the lower grades and for them it was just another world event. We really did try to play it up with teachers as far as the scope of the tragedy and the impact it would have on the country. In the upper grades I think it really gave them a greater sense of reality. Also, we've had our share of students who have graduated and have gone on to serve in the military over in Iraq as a result of 9/11 making them more conscious of the world community.

Ok.

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

Yes, as I said we are more aware now and it seems like we're getting back to the era of Vietnam, we are the big brother to the world and as we educate our kids and in our town we always had a strong turnout for the military. They have always done a lot of recruiting in our schools and for many of our students it's a good follow-up and they go on to train and see the world. But today it's a little different; they know they are destined to serve in a conflict.

Very good.

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

Well, I would say the psychological changes are subtler. We've discussed it at In-Service workshops as far as making our students more aware of the world situation and what can happen in our country now and how we never thought we could have a disaster of this magnitude on our shores, not to mention so close to us. We are only twenty minutes from New York City. We've started to think about bio-terrorism and things of this nature.

Yes, I agree, that's what really scares me.

And you read in the newspaper about these diseases that we know of and then there are those that we haven't even thought of yet. That sort of scares me and you try not to dwell on these things with the kids because you don't want them to be afraid to lead normal lives. I think it should really be a subtler undertone in the curriculum making them aware of the world situation.

Ok

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

Again, as far as the religious issues, over the past two years we have had a Genesis Club formed in our high school where the kids are becoming more aware of world religions and they themselves have formed the club and have recruited a teacher to be the moderator. It's very interesting! They get together during lunch hour and they study world religions and the impact of religion and it all came from them. We haven't seen this in a long time and its all-volunteer and very low key and they do their thing.

Wow! You don't see that in many schools.

6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

I think I have touched upon those in previous questions as far as our overall awareness and our providing faculty with increased workshops as well as our relationship with the police and fire departments.

Ok

7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

I hope we are! As I said we've had lockdowns and we are a small town and we work very well with the police and fire departments. We have an agreement with them, they come in once a year and they speak to the teachers about possible terrorist attacks, what could happen, etc. Anyway, it's an open discussion and they talk about

what we should do in an emergency. This is something that never would have been done before and it's done not to make the teachers paranoid but to simply let them know what we'll do in the event of an emergency. So we work quite closely with them and they are in our schools on a regular basis.

Fine

8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

Hopefully, any effect it may have upon their academic achievement is positive. Psychologically, I think that would be pretty tuff to measure. I think it definitely had a psychological effect on students and staff and they are very aware of it. Now our kids are the ones who will be growing up with this apprehension and the fear of every time we go to a Code Red or Orange, it has to take its effect on them. Even in this area, traveling through tunnels and bridges, things that we do quite frequently being so close to New York.

Great.

9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

No! I don't think any one was prepared nor could we ever have been!

I agree with that.

10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

Again I think we touched upon that in a previous question.

Yes, that true you have.

11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

I think the community as a whole worked very well together and the fact that we are so small certainly helped us logistically keeps things under control as best we could. But I do believe many people will be feeling the effects for a long time.

Very good.

12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

As an instructional leader I think we have to prepare our students for what's happening globally. In a sense I mean going back to the dark ages when I was in school, very little that I remember was taught about the Middle East and we really overlooked that whole area, what they were and what they stood for. We studied Europe and Asia, but now the students really need to know about the entire spectrum of cultures and religions. This is something we have put into our curriculum now and it has changed the way geography and social studies are taught today.

Ok! Excellent.

13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Aside from the increased awareness and teacher workshops not really. As an urban school we have always emphasized security and have a School Resource Officer at the high school and tight procedures for entering the elementary schools.

Great.

14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

I think we have discussed much of that already. Would you like me to reiterate for you.

No. That's not necessary at this point. We are just about through. You have given me some really great feedback. Thank you again. Just one more question!

15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

I think we've touched upon all areas and I think we have tried to be proactive rather than reactive. When I think back to Columbine it really changed the way schools are run all over the country. That whole idea of how we have to protect our students and in my mind we have to address these tragedies and how we must address them. And as I said its on-going, every year we plan to have these workshops with faculty and they bring it back to the students.

Very Good! Thank you very much.

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

Well certainly it's brought us all to an awareness of security and safety of our kids. As a result we have several plans now in place, we practice them, not that you can ever prepare for such a tragedy, but it certainly has brought an awareness that we have to be prepared for anything.

Ok, that's fine!

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

You know I hate to say this because our building witnessed it and that's something we touted, all of our kids watched everything unfold and when the second plane hit everyone watched in disbelief. However, we are a K-8 school and luckily none of our families were directly affected by a loss of parents or sibling. We did of course have faculty members who had friends who were affected or perished. It didn't hit home to the point where a particular family of ours were really suffering a lot. But we did arrange for counseling in the weeks following but other than the kids having a need to express how they felt about it I think they have moved on. The idea at the time when the President was telling everyone to go about his or her normal life that was exactly what we were encouraging.

Ok

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

Again, after witnessing the entire tragedy itself it's brought an awareness of what we need to do to really prepare the kids and I think initially there was a great deal of unity, and I think that part of that has lasted since then.

Great!

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

We have a consultant who visits the school one day a week and she works with kids whether it be in small groups or one on one.

Ok

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

We haven't changed the curriculum specifically for that reason but our curriculum continues to evolve and we do cover world religions but I don't think it has imposed a major change in our curriculum.

Thank you.

6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

Yes and that would be again the emergency procedures that we have in place and policies regarding conduct of individuals in the building and to insure their safety. Basically its pretty much a no tolerance as far as the behavior and role of adults, we really hold them accountable to a very high standard.

7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

Again, I don't think you can ever say 100% for sure you will be prepared but we have everything in place. In other words we have a safe haven and we practice going to that place and fortunately it is a bomb shelter. We practice and have other policies in place.

8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

We really have not addressed that specifically and again I think it was addressed on a regular basis and affected everyone's life. I would have to say we really haven't and through out Direct Instruction model we really haven't modified it in any way.

9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

I don't think we were prepared for it but we did deal with it well. We did have an early dismissal and it was very chaotic. We had parents coming in frantically to pick up their children. We did have a procedure in place to account for all of our 491 children and their safe dismissal. Since then we have new software that gives us multiple alternate pick-up people for kids like aunts and uncles. Since September 11th, the biggest problem was that we had some kids whose parents who worked in New York and we had people who were friends and said that they would take a particular child home. That was an area of concern for us.

Ok

10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

Yeah, again it's getting all the emergency procedures in place and utilizing the counseling that we offer.

Great!

11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

I think it has had a lasting effect and again I think it has to do with how vulnerable we are as a community not only because of our proximity but I think everyone in the country felt they were vulnerable and the world has now changed and its not as secure as it once was.

Very Good.

12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

Yes, and it's really a matter of just being prepared and asking a lot of questions. Everyone that comes into the building you have to be concerned about unless you know them and our building is a brand new facility and it was built for us but the town community uses it after 4pm and at that point we have numerous people using the building. It's really a very difficult job at that point to monitor the building.

I don't like that at all.

13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Yes, many detailed plans including our evacuation and security plans and our emergency plan, which is quite extensive.

Good!

14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

Again, as I have mentioned before with the plans now in effect.

Ok, last question.

15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

No, I think we have covered it all.

Thank you for your time!

Subject 3

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

It made this district become very aware of the need to have a safety committee within the district to be able to look at all the aspects of safety within the district because as a result of September 11th our schools became an evacuation and triage center for the victims and survivors who came across the river. Everything from New York was dumped over into our district. All the boats and ferries came over to our side. They dumped them off in Liberty State Park so we had to mobilize our school buses. We had to mobilize our staff, our crisis intervention people; we mobilized the staff in general, security, and food service. So what we did after this whole tragedy took place we developed what we call an EMQ, an emergency management quick book and in it provides directions for every single emergency procedure we could think of, a step-by-step procedure for action. Take for example a chemical fallout, I take this quick book and I open to chemical fallout and the first thing we do is to enact our Code 105 which is to stay in place because you don't want people out in the air.

Right, right!

You then notify the Superintendent, the Associate Superintendent, and Security from your division, you notify the nurse for any medical situations and you shut off the ventilation system. Then lock all windows and doors, any unoccupied rooms, closets, and lounges and begin the emergency phone chain. So that every principal or whoever was in charge would follow the same procedure. This EMG has everything you could think of, weapons in school, suspicious intruder, fire and gas emergencies, death on the premises, hazardous, materials, riots, utility failures.

Wow!

It really extends beyond 9/11 and provides us with a unified procedure to respond to any emergency. We've given this EMQ to local and state authorities and they have taken it and they are using it as a template to develop their own. In parts of the quick book, it also has phone numbers on pages that can be removed easily so it's a living document that can be updated every year.

I think you may have answered most of my questions but lets go on.

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

Our students in downtown saw the tragedy, they could see it from the school building. Plus at the higher points in town they could really see it. It made them aware of what a tragedy is all about. We had quite a few counseling sessions for the children. We had parents of children, friends of children, relatives of children killed over there. We had a lot of people who were there who participated in the tragedy and survived and we had to provide teams of psychologists, social workers, so that the kids would be able to adjust to the whole thing.

That sounds traumatic!

It really was.

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

Well you know that the first thing we said was school is in session until three o'clock. Now that impacted on the staff because they have family members over there. We shut off all televisions in the schools because we didn't want the kids to see that going on and on and on.

Many schools didn't do that.

We did it because we had staff with husbands and wives working there as well as children working there. Their primary responsibility was the kids in their classroom because we didn't know if the wind would shift or if there would be attacks in our city. We had to minimize the exposure and then we had to evacuate a few schools to other building because the wind shifted. We didn't know if it was toxic and we had to enact our emergency evacuation plans. The plans were really a shortfall because we didn't have a second place to evacuate to meaning that a school on the waterfront would evacuate to another school and that doesn't work for us now because the other school could be only four or five blocks away. Then that school could also be involved. The greatest problem in this district is that if we have to evacuate the entire district we have no place to go.

That's a scary thought.

We've asked the emergency management teams in the county where we are supposed to go and there is no place for us to go with 37,000 kids and staff. There's no place for us to go. We would just have to get them on the highway and walk them west.

What about the buses?

We don't have enough.

We have maybe fifty buses in the district.

So you rotate them?

Yeah, since our schools were involved in the evacuation we had to open the schools with people still occupied there waiting for flights out of the area. So we had to run school while we still had survivors in the buildings.

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

Well, we've had art projects within the schools developing quilts, a lot of counseling about what they saw and heard and how it affected their families. We also took part with the FBI who told our faculty to listen to the kids because they would provide valuable information that we could use because our school is so diverse. The police and the FBI then received many leads from our students that helped them solve their case. From what little kids say in the classroom, nothing that they said was dismissed and a lot of it really helped the government in their case. We've had some faculty who has had a hard time adjusting because of the tragedy itself. In fact, we have had a person retire from the district on a medical as a result of it. They couldn't deal with the trauma. All our teams have now been trained in crisis management.

Great!

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

No, no real changes have been made.

6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

We've gone for some extensive training both here with the local police and outside agencies. We've developed a whole policy about "Stay in Place." A lot of times if someone is going to bomb a building they attempt to cause a rush of panic so people will run into an area that they are going to detonate. We had an extensive number of bomb threats and as a result we developed a whole new bomb threat procedure after 9/11. We had one building that received a hundred and something bomb threats and the new policy was able to curtail it. We inspect every building every day; we put in metal detectors in our high schools and middle schools to protect our kids.

Excellent.

7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

O yeah! We are prepared and of course if it happens we've designated a secondary site for the Board of Education building. We have developed a secondary form of communication because we lost our cell phones and repeater system. So we developed a means of communication by a messenger.

Wow! This really sounds like a model plan for the country!

Well, we were in the middle of it.

8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

We have in the sense that we celebrate the event in a positive note rather than a tragic note. The first year we had the Commissioner of Education and everything was centered on art and music and as the kids get older I think it will dissipate the same as Pearl Harbor has. And I think if we keep it on a positive note it is better for the kids.

Fine

9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

Well we thought we were prepared and we did react the way we should have reacted but we were making those decisions as we had to whereas now those decisions are already planned out ahead of time. If one of us now is not in the school at the time the next person in charge will know exactly what to do.

Fine

10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

We've stepped up security quite a bit.

11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

We have a better relationship with the police department, we have police in our schools and its more positive environment for the kids and they see that the police are there to protect them. Our city was taken over by the U.S. Army right after 9/11 because it became the main evacuation site with all the access points to N.Y. You couldn't move around the city unless you were moving with the police department. Also, as the largest group of people in the city they had to decide

what they were going to do with the schools. But they never considered us in all of this prior to 9/11.

Excellent

12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

The district continued on as far as instruction was concerned. They just added to the supplemental programs as far as training people how to react to disasters. What we have is an emergency box in every principal's office. It's like a tub. It's has flash lights, caution tape, medical supplies, everything the Red Cross would use in an emergency. It has a megaphone because in some schools we lost the P.A. system and we had to communicate to the staff.

Ok

13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

I think we've discussed them already.

I agree.

14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

Again, we have talked in detail in this area.

Fine

15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

No, I don't think so.

Thank you very much.

Subject 4

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

For the first month it was negative since then minimal. Our students have their own 9/11 on a weekly basis. When your relatives are being incarcerated, there are fights going on, the police are in all the time what happened in New York is just a

memory. There is so much going on in their own projects on a daily basis that 9/11 is just something that happened in a foreign land. There were some students who had trouble sleeping at night and the local newspaper came in and did a story.

Very good, that's powerful.

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

Again, I believe it's minimal because in their lives the bleakness of their lives is similar to what may have went on in Bagdad. Despite the fact that we were in open trailers then and could smell the smoke and we heard the ambulances.

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

There are many people in our district who really reacted strongly to the event of 9/11 and I think may have even over-reacted thereby adding additional stress.

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

Well, in the last two hours we had a first grader who had to leave school because of a psychological problem. I think his mother is a drug dealer. We had two girls in peer mediation that had a fist fight last week and we just had a boy who threw a pencil in the eye of another student. Nothing really seemed to affect them after 9/11 because so much is going on in their lives. They have so much baggage that I think that in a more stable community 9/11 may have had a more negative effect.

I understand.

Just one more thing. When your uncle just got murdered last night, and your living with your grandmother, your dad's in jail, and your mother just hopped on a bus to Texas, its all relative.

Wow! I can't believe that.

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

No, absolutely not. As you know here in New Jersey everything is GEPA and ESPA and we don't have enough time in the day because these things are dictated by the State. Our test scores when I became principal were quite low and the bulk

of our time is spent trying to get kids to be more civil and educate to read and write. We really have to reflect an increase in our test scores or we can lose considerable funding.

6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

There are a lot of policies in the Office of Emergency Management and how we need to evacuate them in an emergency situation in the event there was a chemical event.

OK, very good.

7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

That depends, if they are going to drop some kind of chemical warfare, we're not, and I guess we are prepared as we can be. We've been told that we are a safe harbor and that we can't turn people down if they are seeking shelter. We're at war with a sub-culture every day and we need to dedicate our energy on that. We have forty cameras in and around the building. We probably have the most secure building in the State. You cannot get in this building unless you have a photo ID, even board members need one as well as parents. So yes we have changed policy. A lot of it has to do with the society that we live in. Last we I suspended three kids for threatening a student with knives. We have terrorists from within.

Thank you.

8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

I really haven't. What I tried to do was put the full focus not on the putting your head under the desks but focusing on moving forward. I really don't think it's had an effect. Our inner city kids are resilient and it bothered some of them for a month or so but they have just moved on. If you live in the projects and believe me 9/11 isn't going to bother you that much. It's had an economic effect and maybe a psychological effect for a few months.

That's fine.

9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

Absolutely not. I made it up as I went along. What we decided to do was cord off the school and allows only the parents to come in for their children with the proper identification to pick up their children. We had a staff member escort the student down to the Main Office and they were dismissed from there. I went around personally and explained what was going on to each class. I f you have to

hear something this traumatic you should hear it from your principal. At 2:45 I let all the teachers go and at 6:00 I let the administrator leave and I waited until 9:00 pm for the last parent.

I know what you mean.

10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

I've mentioned several things already but I would have to say that we were honest with them and reacted in a calm and caring manner. It's as simple as that.

Excellent.

11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

Well, again, I think initially we were all in shock but everyone really pulled together throughout the entire ordeal and it was very uplifting to see that. And again, given what these kids live through on a daily basis I think they are somewhat hardened.

Ok

12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

Initially I think it really impacted on instruction for the first few weeks but with the increased counseling and support from parents, I think the kids have recovered quite well.

Ok then.

13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Not really, as I said before we are probably one of the safest schools in the State because our security is so tight. We are very aware of the dangers around us each day and we try very hard to educate our kids to be mindful of that.

I believe that.

14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

We have upgraded our overall emergency policies but you are never really sure how you will react in a real emergency, lets face it.

You're right.

15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

No not really.

Thank you for your time.

Subject 5

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

I would think that safety and security comes to mind more often now. Would you believe that our kids were scheduled to go on a field trip to the World Trade Center on the day of the incident? So we have more of a lump in our throat about it and it was at 9:00am that the bus was just getting ready to leave. The event had already taken place but we could have been there. Now whenever we go to New York or anyplace we definitely think of safety first.

Ok, that's fine.

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

Well, the downtown school in the Video Production Class they actually filmed the second plane hitting the tower and all of our students were able to see the smoke and the event as it was unfolding. We did have many meeting with the kids and the teachers about 9/11 because we thought there would be some residual effect.

Interesting.

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

I don't think we have changed things organizationally. I mean we are more conscious of policies now regarding safety and trips and look at them a little more closely. But other than that I don't really think anything else has changed.

Very good

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

The immediate trauma issues were addressed in open discussions, we had some counselors come in and discuss the concerns of students individually and in large groups. I actually think we had more traumas from teachers. At least they voiced more of their concerns and they were concerned for the kids too. But it was worse in the downtown center than in the uptown center.

Great, next question.

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

I'm trying to think because I have covered curriculum recently and I don't really recall any curricular changes that have taken place. I think we are more sensitive to diversity and cultures. I mean we always were, our kids come from very diverse backgrounds. We're pretty open to this.

Very good

6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

I don't know. We started to get together a lot of things. I mean 9/11 really precipitated actions in the area of crisis management. We were into it before 9/11 a little and after the incident we really investigated further programs but it sort of died. We did come up with a crisis plan that we didn't have before.

Ok, that's fine.

7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

I don't think so. I don't think you can ever be prepared for a tragedy of that magnitude.

Fair enough.

8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

We really haven't considered that. I can't speak for the principal's but I don't think we have really spent a lot of time on that and now that you bring that up we probably should investigate that to some degree.

Ok then.

9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

No, not in any way. I just thank God that the students going on the field trip were delayed and didn't leave for the city. That would have been horrible.

I agree.

10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

Other than create this crisis plan which says who does what and when we really haven't. I mean we were working on a crisis plan because of things like Columbine. In reality we were addressing issues that were internal and not external.

That's true

11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

I think like most schools, it really took weeks for the anxiety and emotional trauma to subside.

You're right about that.

12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

No, but if I thought what should be done we would of dedicated more time to diversity and differences and why people act the way they do so they could understand each other a little better.

Sounds great.

13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Honestly, we have talked quite a bit about it but really haven't acted upon it.

That's an honest answer.

14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

First, we created a crisis plan and other than that I can't think of anything else. Of course, we review the safety plans and practice them often.

Ok

15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

No, none that I can think of.

Thank you very much for your time.

Subject 6

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

The way it impacted upon me as an administrator was in the area of security, making sure the building were safe. It really opened our eyes to the reality that a catastrophic event could actually take place. We really put in motion our emergency management plans so that we would be prepared for germ warfare, a catastrophic accident, or any other sort of emergency.

Very good

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

It seemed to have a greater impact on those students whose parents, relatives, and friends were killed, injured, or involved in some way in the World Trade Center. So in that sense they were impacted more by the event than the other students.

In some cases teachers were more effected than the students. I lost a cousin in the World Trade Center and we had other teachers who also lost family members. There was definitely a residual effect.

Ok.

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

I don't think it really impacted upon the school organization in terms of being cognizant of emergency management plans and the various groups that we were involved with during the crisis.

Fine.

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

I don't think there were any changes but there were counselors and crisis management people available to them. In my experience I didn't really observe any great psychological changes over that period of time. Initially, yes, but I didn't see it over the long run.

That's fine.

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

No, because I think the Core Content Standards and what we were doing prior to September 11th was on target but certainly after 9/11 and the onset of war teachers have generated discussions concerning the issue of war but no major curricular changes.

That's true.

6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

No, just in the way of procedures and how we handle catastrophic events, that the only real change that has been made. Of course, looking at our own school security.

Next question.

7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

We are as prepared as possible, you can't prepare for everything but there are procedures in place in the event of a catastrophic situation. I think it's important that the staff is alerted to it and that the parents understand their responsibilities.

Ok.

8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

Actually none. That hasn't been an area that we have addressed.

Really? Ok.

9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

To the extent that we had to prepare things on a dime, yes. Now in the event of a terrorist attack we practice drills and if it was to happen again we are better prepared because we know what we need to do now to a certain extent.

Very good.

10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

Well, we've revised our Emergency Management Plans, included in them are action plans for contacting the police, fire department, Red Cross, Crisis counselors etc. And this plan covers multiple crisis situations, for example, an explosion in the building, what would you do.

Very good

11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

I think we've touched upon that as I said initially yes it was traumatic for those who had family involved in some way but the community really pulled together. It was incredible the support that we received.

I believe it.

12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

I don't think it has impacted on instruction but it has just made people more aware of these horrible events that could happen and now we are more prepared for it. I don't think instruction has changed much.

Ok.

13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Yes, we lock all the doors now in addition to installing a closed circuit monitor at the door where my secretary can buzz someone in at the front entrance. We have ID cards for all the students. Teachers are aware that in the event of a tragedy there is a set of procedures to follow so everyone is on the same page. There are evacuation points, places to go, etc.

14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

As I've just mentioned we've definitely taken more precautions since September 11th and the onset of the war in Iraq.

Ok, last question.

15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

No, I think it goes back to a question you asked earlier and since 9/11 it seems to me that the schools that were farther away really weren't affected as much as we were.

Thank you.

Subject 7

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

Well, we had to be concerned about the student body and the faculty in our school because they had relatives who were working over there. We tried to keep everyone as calm as possible. It turned out that there was a large contingency of doctors close to our school in the Convention Center and we were asked to bus them to a site that was set up as a triage for injured patients at Liberty Science Center. Of course we helped with that and then we had to get calls out to parents and that was difficult to do, as you know. We tried to act as quickly as we could keeping everyone calm.

Wow, that sounds frightening.

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

Well, two of them had lost family members in the tragedy and some of the students had difficulty sleeping at night.

Ok

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

I think everyone worked really well together and of course we couldn't let the kids go home until their parents came to pick them up. We had students here

until late at night and then you had the problem with the tunnels. So our town was caught in the middle but everyone pulled together.

That's great.

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

Well, of course we made available the members of the Child Study Team and we let the parents know that if their children were having any serious problems we had people at school who could help them.

Very good.

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

I think some of that is covered in Social Studies but I'm not sure. We write the curriculum but I think an emphasis has been written to focus on global issues to help our students better understand what goes on around the world.

Fair enough.

Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

Of course, we did drills in the school and we worked with the police. We set up the whole system as to what to do if something like this happens again. We had the police come in and review the layout of the building and we also designated where the kids should go in an emergency. For example, if something happened at one end of town, the school would evacuate to the other end of town.

Ok, next question.

6. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

Yeah I think we are! You never know what the next one is going to be but I think we're prepared. I think everyone came through, the bus drivers, everyone.

Ok

7. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

Other than what I previously mentioned about the Child Study Team working with the students and having the teachers talk about what happened, not really.

Hopefully, we were able to resolve their fears but at the same time you have to be prepared if something should occur in the future.

Very good

8. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

No, I can't say that we were but as I said we had a tremendous amount of cooperation from our entire staff and police and fire community.

That's great.

9. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

Again as I mentioned the entire school community really pulled it all together as best they could to help out and keep the kids calm.

Ok

10. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

Well, there were people that passed away in the town, not only parents. The town did a nice thing and erected a monument of the deceased by the library. They had a lovely memorial service and our children participated and sang. All the relatives were invited and they saw the concern of the community for them. They did a real nice job in our town.

Great.

11. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

No, not really. What we tried to do was keep things as normal as we could. The adults and administrators were planning for anything that was to come but we tried to keep the kids calm.

Ok

12. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Two of the schools had monitoring systems in place and they were installed in our other two schools providing for better security. Everyone has that now so from the standpoint of anyone trying to get in the building, we're pretty secure.

Very good.

13. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

Other than what we have talked about nothing more at this time.

That's fine

14. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

No, not really.

Thank you.

Subject 8

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

I think my role is always somehow so indirect and I think that's how I would start it. I will say that because of our location, September 11th was an unbelievably difficult day for us. Every school in the district saw the towers fall. I didn't see it because my office faces a different direction. But we had a couple thousand kids see them fall and we did have a traumatic day and we were asked to go out last February and speak about our experiences in Chicago at a convention that was being held.

Many of the things that we did that day were simply spontaneous. We could turn any corner in our town for weeks and see the smoldering buildings. So it had a really profound impact on us. We also applied for a major grant and were given \$100,000 for enhanced security.

That's great.

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

Well, I think 9/11 had a profound effect upon our kids. I've seen the short-term effects, which were obvious, and we're still seeing the long-range effects today. We've noticed that the children were reacting with nightmares long after the

event. The young children came to realize that Mommy, Daddy, and the principal couldn't protect us from these terrible events. In our town it really reminded me of what would have been a nuclear event. Particularly in our town and most of Hudson County saw the entire event unfold and our kids were really devastated. That's what our trip to Chicago was all about. How we dealt with the incident and the difficult time we went through.

OK, next question.

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

Initially, there was a tremendous amount of security with the implementation of our Emergency Management Plan. Also, I have been working with the town emergency management team including things as mundane as hurricanes and power outages, etc. I meet with one of the detectives in our town on a regular basis to keep the board up to speed on what are the priorities.

I'll give you an example. At the high school we are on one square block and we have an underground parking lot, which the police have identified, as a very dangerous place. Because if you think about what could occur in that spot. Of course we keep that quiet. But the fact of the matter is, it's a very dangerous spot and could literally put our building down. So we're very concerned about that. We do, however, have very tight security in that area and have signs posted and everyone that parks in that area have stickers on their car. In fact, I was given a warning notice for parking in there and I congratulated the security guard.

Its funny, the money that we received from the grant did not permit us to buy security cameras, so we wound up giving \$40,000 back.

That seems strange.

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

We have all the standard support mechanisms in place and we put heavy emphasis on counseling in the high school. We still have visits from counselors who assist students who are still struggling with issues and we really do think the event of 9/11 has had serious effects on many students, particularly this feeling of insecurity that this impenetrable nation is now vulnerable. It really changed our outlook on things. Our town witnessed the entire day and had clear view unlike many of the other towns. It was a surreal experience. We had kids saying to the teachers that the towers didn't fall; it was the building next to it. They were in complete disbelief and denial.

After speaking with other superintendents in the county, their responses of what they experienced was very different than ours because we had such a clear view. Our experience was so much more traumatic. I have to tell you when the first building fell I really had to take a few minutes to gain my composure. After that I locked down all the building, I didn't let any kids go home until we were sure that this wasn't a nation wide plot. We had police out front of the schools for weeks. It was really a horrible day and we didn't what to do. I tell people all the time you could have a perfect emergency management plan but what really made the difference for us was the experience of our veteran people.

That day it was all about veteran educators who managed the building and made the right the decisions.

That's incredible.

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

The big change was really the modification of our EMP and outlined every possible emergency we could come up with and came up with a list of things that everyone should be doing from contacting the police to initiating the emergency telephone chain and so on. I've been in many tragic incidents in my life as an administrator and every one of those events was unique in its own way. I can probably write a book.

You probably should.

Yeah, you're right.

6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

Aside from upgrading the EMP, none that I can think of.

7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

Like I said, no one is ever prepared for an event of that magnitude. All we can hope for is that people will make the right decisions when the time comes for the good of the kids.

I agree.

8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

I think it was short term. I stayed up the whole night and wrote a letter to the parents and highlighted key items that needed to be addressed by them. Then another letter went out about anthrax several weeks later. But that was very much procedural. The 9/11 letter was brief but very informative as to what parents need to do. What was different is that very young children interpreted the event in a very different manner. Even my own son was obsessed about it and wanted to know who was the strongest nation.

The 9/11 letter talks about professional help that we had in our school, information on the web site, and the issue of bias. We did not want any specific culture taking blame for this.

Excellent.

9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

No, absolutely not.

Next question.

10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

Again, what we've said thus far regarding recognizing that they were seriously affected by this event and providing counseling for them even up until now.

Very good.

11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

We've pretty much covered that in some much as we are a very small town and being so close to New York I don't think there was one person in this town that wasn't affected by it.

I believe that.

12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

I think initially it was a negative impact on instruction and suggested that teachers move off this issue and move on and that it was temporary. I think after a few days the kids were back on track.

The other issue is that we wrongly assumed that the adults were OK, and they weren't OK. When I think about it I don't think I had the ability to deal with all the adult issues. Like I said, I myself had to really struggle to gain my composure because I really thought that this might be the end.

If I had had to reflect on what we did I would have to say that we didn't do enough for the staff and that would have been one of the corrective strategies when I think about next time. I guess I just assumed that adults would be OK and I don't know if we had the where with all to it.

Interesting.

13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Yeah, we've added additional security to the high school. Our high school is like Penn Station in the evening. The entire community uses the facility, the gym, the theatre, etc.

14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

As I've said, the upgrading of the EMP hopefully will better prepare us to deal with a tragedy in the future.

And the last question.

15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

No.

Thank you for your time. I really enjoyed speaking with you and for providing me some very interesting insights.

You're welcome.

Subject 9

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

Well, it had a great impact. As an educator we are really an extension of New York City here and we had a lot of parents who were involved with the event itself and we had to deal with the immediacy of the tragedy. We were in school and the radio was on and the school psychologist told us. At that point we were

all focused on listening and watching television and of course we were all stunned. We didn't know what parents were over there and who was injured and that was a horrible experience as could be expected. Then what happened after of course the turmoil lasted for weeks and we decided we had to have a better emergency action plan. We had meeting for weeks trying to develop a more comprehensive plan that would better prepare us for a tragedy or disaster.

Was this at the district level?

Actually each school developed their own plan based on the individual needs of the school. In fact we developed a whole emergency kit. We have gallons of water, flashlights and medical supplies. We made a list of what everyone wanted and we read literature of what should be in an emergency kit. Oh, and duct tape, that was a big thing too.

Ok, next question.

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

Being a special school for multiply handicapped students they really had no awareness of what was going on. There were a few that had an idea that something serious was going on and they pretty much forgot about it the next day. Very few really could grasp it. Then when they went home and came back the next day they were fine. There were two staff members who had family members who had been killed and that was difficult to deal with. None of the students had immediate family who were injured or killed which was great.

Absolutely.

Our staff was very supportive in assisting both adults and students.

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

Overall, I think the school organization dealt with the entire tragedy quite well. Given the circumstances I don't think there was much we could do at the time other than keep the students safe until their parents came to pick them up.

Very well.

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

I have to say that in general there was no impact upon our students given their limited ability and I would have to say that the ones that were really impacted psychologically were the adults.

Ok, next question.

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

I really would say there has been none based on the specific needs of our curriculum.

Ok

6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

We have our new handbook. If we have to close up and evacuate our school, we have plans. If we have to lock it down, we have plans. We have locations as to where to meet and everyone in the building has a copy. We have information from the Office of Emergency Management as what to do in a step-by-step format in the event of a disaster of any kind. It's somewhat reassuring but you never know how people will react in an emergency.

You're right.

7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

As well as we can be if that means anything. We now know that we have to turn off the ventilation in the event of a chemical attack and we have a short wave radio in the event of a weather emergency or any other tragedy in the event we lose power. We put together a really great book that provides for every contingency.

That's great.

8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

That doesn't really apply to our students.

OK

9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

As well as we could have been I suppose but when you develop those plans you realize how little control you really do have even if you are somewhat prepared. It's like having a fire drill; you're hoping that it never happens and that you'll be able to get out but you practice that fire drill anyway.

Great.

10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

Aside from providing the staff with immediate support from our Child Study team and the re-development of our Emergency Management Plan, I would say nothing more.

Fine

11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

Well, I think that the school community was traumatized as we all were. There was really no escaping the effects.

You're right.

12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

The level of instruction is pretty basic and nothing has really changed too much. I would say that September 11th did not drive any changes in that sense.

Ok, very well.

13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Aside from what we spoke of already I had to upgrade the Public Address System. There were some dead spots in the building, which could really create a problem in an emergency. The 9/11 events really helped me in that area because the district really did not want to put the money out for that.

I thought that was one thing that was really important and now we have fire drills where we block off a section of the building to see how the students will react. I put up a sign that says this exit is blocked. That's the sort of thing we do.

Great.

14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

Well, yeah, we had several meeting and we decided we had to come up with a plan. The school psychologist and the School Social Worker provided the staff with support and additional resources if they needed them. But I would say that no one really seemed to use his or her assistance. But the faculty supported each other.

That's great.

15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

No. Not really. I think I told you everything and of course every September 11th we recognize the victims and their families in some way.

Thank you very much for your time.

Subject 10

1. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon your role as superintendent?

Well, for the situation here in my district, it was critical because we were close to the activity. We were used as a holding spot for the flux of injured people that came in from New York that were in the Liberty Science Center Area. Our whole gym was filled with hundreds of beds and all the emergency service agencies worked with us.

That's incredible.

Our town has a very cohesive relationship with the men in blue so we worked together very well on that day. Our food services supported the people that were here. Our local restaurants donated a tremendous amount of food. When it was time for the people to leave we provided bussing for them. Our town was locked, you couldn't get in or out. So anyone that was here was stuck. We even brought food to people on Kennedy Boulevard who were locked in for hours. So it was quite a commitment on our part and personally I was very involved because my son was over there and I didn't know where he was.

That sounds pretty scary.

On that day, we have a local television broadcast and I sent out a message that all parents should come and pick up their children because we didn't know what parents were over there. I told all the principals that no child is to go home

unless a child is picked up by a parent. We have an automated telephone service that was put into effect right away and parents were told to come and pick up their children. The kids could have gone home a minute after we gave the release but no children was permitted to walk home because we didn't know what they were walking home to.

That was a good move.

Yeah, because a lot of people work in New York here. But we kept our heads together.

Ok

2. To what extent do you believe the September 11th tragedy has impacted upon your students?

If you are on the third floor in some of the schools in our town you can see the New York skyline very clearly. There were some kids who just happened to get up and happened to see the collapse and that was very traumatic for them.

Ok

3. How would you describe the impact that the September 11th tragedy has had upon the role of your school organization?

We used our guidance counselors to work with the students and staff to provide services for the students and staff since some staff lost family members.

Very good.

4. What changes have you implemented to address the psychological needs of your students since 9/11?

Well actually, we put support in where we would see difficulty, the counselor was always available and where we saw there was very serious psychological trauma we referred them to outside services.

That's fine.

5. To what extent has there been recommendations proposed in order to modify curriculum providing for greater depth and breadth concerning global and religious issues?

Well, we have quite a few Arabic children and we teach Character Education as part of our overall curriculum and we try to teach everyone that they are unique

and that we all are special people who need to respect one another and that's called being an American.

Great.

6. Has policy been created to address future acts of terrorism, tragedy, or disaster?

Well actually, we had a plan and under the circumstances we had to beef up the plan as a result of September 11th. We created a more extensive plan and I have participated in a sort of SWAT team activity in the event of an intruder. We also worked with the Merck Corporation located on the waterfront that also participated in revised emergency management procedures.

Interesting.

7. Is your school prepared in the event of another terrorist attack?

We're better prepared but I don't think if we're ever really prepared for something of that magnitude because it really matters where it happens. Because right here in this area it was very traumatic but where my daughter lives in Somerset County, the trauma was removed. It wasn't as traumatic as in our district.

Great.

8. To what extent have you considered the long-term psychological impact of 9/11 upon your students and the affect it may have on their academic achievement?

I don't really think with the exception of someone who had lost a family member, that our kids experienced any significant prolonged trauma. Now a days kids accept these things particularly because there is a war going on and they see it on the news. I think there is a sort of acceptance and I don't like that but I think it's the reality.

That's fine.

9. Do you believe that you were prepared to deal with the terrorist attack of September 11th?

No, I don't. But I do believe that we really managed very, very well under the circumstances.

That's great.

10. As a school organization, what has your district done in response to 9/11 in order to address the needs of your students?

I'd say we have covered that pretty much and I wouldn't want to repeat it all again, unless you need me to.

No, that's fine we have covered it.

11. To what extent has the events of September 11th impacted upon your school community?

Well, again, as I had said previously it was a nightmare but somehow we managed to pull it together working as a team.

Fine.

12. How have the additional responsibilities of addressing the issue of 9/11 within your school community impacted upon your role as an instructional leader?

Sure I think initially everyone was shook up and instruction was affected for a while. I mean how could anyone come and violate the United States of America. I mean we're always watching it on television and now it was happening right here in our home. But I think people started to realize we were vulnerable. But I think the kids and adults got through it and were able to move on after a week or so.

Ok

13. Have additional safety and security measures been implemented within your school as a result of 9/11?

Yes, yes, yes. We've always had cameras at the doors. Now things have changed. Of course parents have access but once the school is cleared it is really locked down and secure. The areas that were not secure were really tightened up. We've put numbers on every single door in every school in the district so in the event there is an emergency or an intruder the police can locate the area immediately.

Wow, that's a great idea.

The police and fire department have detailed maps of every school so now we can say, for example, there's an intruder at door #28. Also, in order to get in or out of our high school you have to swipe your ID badge. We are 24-7 with swipe in and out.

I like that idea.

In the elementary schools we have a sign in procedure and everyone needs a pass to walk around. We have cops in the school program and we usually have an officer in every school. In the high school we have six police officers.

How many students are in your high school?

2400

I gave the captain of the police department a key to every building so in the event of a crisis they have immediate access. They have the floor plans of every school. In the event of an emergency, I take the entire school roster with me. Now in the event of a school evacuation we walk the students away from the building. We do lockdown drills in every school once a month and every classroom has shades that roll down. Every teacher knows what to do. The halls are clear every day and we maintain strict discipline.

We had several bomb scares in the past and the last one was in March during the HSPA. It was horrible. It was cold and rainy and no one had their coats and we had to move them to two other schools. We also have a plan with the Catholic Schools where we could use their church and schools.

We actually caught the two kids who initiated the bomb scare and the first time in our school history we expelled the two students.

That's incredible.

14. What steps have you taken to ensure the welfare of your staff and students in the event of another terrorist strike?

I'd say I've covered that pretty much. Wouldn't you say?

Yes, absolutely.

15. Are there any other issues or concerns that have impacted upon your school district as a result of disaster or tragedy that I have not addressed?

No, not really.

Thank you very much.